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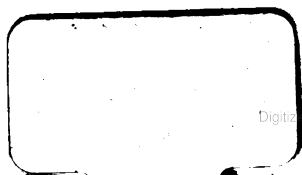
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# THE ITALIANS OF TO-DAY

*From the French of*

RENÉ BAZIN

TRANSLATED BY

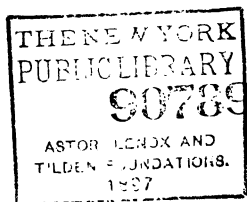
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# THE ITALIANS OF TO-DAY.

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## I.

### THE NORTHERN PROVINCES—PROVINCIAL LIFE.

AFTER one of the rugged Alpine passes, how beautiful is the Lombard plain! Barbarians, in ancient days, felt its irresistible charm. Probably it was very much the same when they saw it that it is now—always cultivated, fertile, green, and a marvel of skilful irrigation! What a delicious freshness in the air from these little artificial streamlets that weave a blue network over the land! They cross the highways, they intersect the fields, they come near each other, they go far apart; finally, one by one, they fall into the wide canal, which carries elsewhere the fertilizing water, forever running, yet never wasted. From all this irrigation it results that the land gives four or five crops of hay; the ricefields are crowded with heavy ears; the clover is like a blossoming thicket; the cornfields, like canebrakes. The whole land is of marvellous fertility; and still the population is poor.

This is an amazing problem, and one which con-

fronts us almost everywhere in Italy. In passing from city to city, making no stop, asking no questions, you cannot help observing the contrast between the soil which gives—or can give—everything in abundance, and the peasant, poverty-stricken and unhealthy, as in Lombardy, or driven to emigrate, as in Calabria. The villages along the route have not the clean and cheerful look of the French or Swiss. Seen from a distance, crowning a hill-top, their tiled roofs bright in the sunlight, the profile of them is attractive. Gliding rapidly by in the train you think: “What an interesting country! That quaint group of gables marching up the hill, those narrow streets seen like a flash, that castle commanding the valley, all this primitive nook, unexplored of the tourist—how entertaining to visit it!” Many of these little towns I have visited—the most sequestered, the most mediæval—and seen close at hand, the whole thing was so sad, so absolutely wretched, that the impression of the picturesque, for a moment dominant, faded completely, and vanished in the presence of pity for human misery.

For this world of poverty is also a hard-working world. I know of nothing more erroneous than that popular prejudice which represents the Italians as a nation of *lazzaroni*, picturesque in their rags, always basking in the sun, always stretching out a hand for charity when the stranger passes by. Look at those men digging trenches in the



ricefields, or at those preparing the ground for the winter wheat, or at those—and the women, too—who are stringing up along the sides of the farm buildings the russet ears of corn, the sheaves of the *gran turco*, of which *polenta* is made. Are they idle over their work? Is there any air of opera peasants about them? I have been among Italian labourers in the great estates at the foot of the Apennines; I have seen them on the Roman Campagna, in the country around Naples, at Reggio in Calabria; in Sicily the French superintendent of the Duke d'Aumale's vineyards assured me that they were more industrious, that they had more endurance and more patience than any French labourers he had ever known. Others have said to me, speaking of Romagna, which I have not yet visited, that I shall see there "the greatest diggers of the ground" that there are in the world. Everywhere, and at all times, the same testimony comes to me in respect to this strong, unhappy race of men.]

Neither poet nor novelist has told the story of the great bands who leave their villages in the winter and spring, and go to labour on the Roman Campagna, living in camps under the charge of their *caporale*,—the dramas of such a life,—the talk that goes on at evening in the huts where nomad shepherds make their sheep's-milk cheeses. But for this lack the Italian peasant would have had his place in literature with the Russian

mujik and the rugged labourer in the fields of France. The question grows more and more urgent, whence their extreme poverty? To answer it we must take the provinces separately and examine local conditions, the method of agriculture, the divisions of the land, the climate, matters of hygiene, and also those profound differences of race and character which, for instance, make it possible that the peasant in the Emilia or in Tuscany can by his own labour maintain his family on the spot where he was born, while elsewhere the condition of others is so precarious. Many of these local causes I shall be able to indicate. The principal cause, however, over the entire peninsula, is the excessive taxation with which the land is burdened.

"Don't you think it's hard?" a farmer in Northern Italy said to me. "What prosperity, what spirit of enterprise, what progress is possible in a country where the soil is taxed thirty-three per cent. of its net income? And I am not speaking of the buildings on which, owing to overvaluations, we sometimes pay as high as fifty or sixty per cent. of what we receive in rent. It was very well said by Count Iacini that the state, the provinces, the towns, do not *tax* but *plunder* the soil."

Add to this, usury—still very prevalent, notwithstanding the creation of national banks—and the scantiness and poor quality of food, which, in

the North, occasions the frightful skin disease, *pellagra*; and the deplorable condition of many of the cottages, which the proprietors have not the means or have not the humanity to repair; and without dwelling further upon causes, it is easy to understand why socialism found its earliest partisans in Italy among the rural population. The peasant had not become desirous of the overthrow of the old *régime*; he had not been reached by the republican propaganda of the Mazzinians; he had remained quite indifferent to his political rights: but, for the last twenty years, he has been more and more interested in that which socialism preaches, in the elementary form adapted to his mental condition: "*You have nothing; they have everything: take their place.*"

Lombardy, Venetia, Emilia, Romagna, all have rural groups strongly imbued with socialism. The evil spreads. Annual disturbances make this apparent at different points. And it is not the newspapers—rarely read by these ignorant populations—which contribute most to this propaganda, nor yet the public addresses of leaders, such as the deputies Costa and Maffei. The real and most dangerous agents of rural socialism are the primary teachers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the address of Count Joseph Grabinski before the Agricultural Society of Bologna: *lo Sciapero e la questione sociale nelle campagne*. Generelli, Bologna, 1892.

With all this enormous tax which they levy upon the product of the land, however, neither state, nor province, nor town, is rich. This is evident to the most careless observer. An under secretary in the Ministry of Public Instruction recently declared, in an address to the voters of Gallarate, that 348 towns, belonging to 31 provinces, were irregular in the payment of their schoolmasters, and were at that moment actually in arrears toward over a thousand of these interesting creditors. This is an official statement. But daily life offers a multitude of other facts not less significant.

When I was last in Italy, an employee of the Italian telegraph paid me a money order in gold. In my present visit I have been less fortunate. The only gold I have seen has been that which I paid to others. The piece of silver of five lire has disappeared; the two lire and the one lira are not plenty; and often in the country, if you have to change a bill, you must accept copper. Ten francs in copper! I have been obliged to take them, however, after a vain attempt to do better. This was inconvenient; and if you ask the reason for such a scarcity of silver coin, you will receive this explanation: "*Una piccola combinazione, signore!*" Listen! Some of our people are taking the opportunity to speculate. They collect the silver in pieces of five and two and one and carry it over the frontier. Now, as soon as the *lire* cross the



Alps, they are *francs*; that is to say, they have gained three or four per cent. in value. Then the speculator obtains his letter of exchange on France or Switzerland, and he has made quite a little profit, without any risk. Chiefly through transactions of this kind, our neighbour, Switzerland, has now eighty millions of francs of Italian silver,—having recently taken account of them,—and in France there are still more.” Examples could be multiplied; but of what use?

The Italians readily acknowledge their poverty. The comparison between rich France, and Italy which is not rich, is constantly before their eyes. It has something to do, no doubt, with that feeling of jealousy—jealousy, rather than enmity—which some of them entertain toward France. They are brought to a stand or they are seriously hampered in their undertakings, in their great public works, by the lack of funds. And this wound to their pride is made the keener by their perfectly justifiable consciousness of merit. ✓

One cannot be much in Italy, in fact, without being struck with the great amount of labour and of intelligence which is expended there; with the projects of every kind that are on foot; with the merit of the men one meets. Finally you come to think: “An armed Italy, an Italy which exhausts itself in armaments, is, as has been well said, far from being of no account; but an Italy frugal and careful would be a formidable power. Everything,

in her case, is ready to go forward. Money is all she lacks. If she did but know!"

#### MILAN, ALL SOULS' DAY.

The Cathedral displayed its finest decorations for the festa of yesterday, and they have not yet been removed. All the way down the nave and in the transept paintings draped in crimson are hung between the columns. They represent scenes in the life of S. Charles Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan; but they are placed so high that one cannot judge of their merits as works of art. They shut off the light from the tall windows, and the great church, always dark, is made still darker. There is a crowd at the morning masses, as many men as women, and far more simple and familiar in their devotions than worshippers in French churches usually are. There are not those symmetrical rows of chairs or benches, the ones in front reserved for the people who pay for them, the others, behind, left for the poor. Here each person takes his chair from a great mass, at the entrance to the transept, and places it where he likes. An employee of the church also assists in the distribution. He is in a livery-jacket, like a house servant, which appears to be a good idea; also he asks no compensation, which is surely another. The groups are interesting. I observe a lady in stylish dress, her husband in a light overcoat, surrounded by people of the humblest class,

yet perfectly contented with their surroundings; in front, two woolly shepherds, very serious, very dirty, very hard-featured; at the left, half a dozen young girls seated on their heels, their dragging shawls making a slight rustle all the time, as the wearers lean over to talk among themselves, in a very low tone, still giving their main attention to the service; behind, a row of peasant women, brilliant in red and yellow. All these people elbow one another more unconcernedly than in France; and the democratic spirit of Italy shows itself in this corner of the Duomo, as it does everywhere else.

I go out. It is a gray morning. The tramway leading to the *cimitero monumentale* is besieged. From both ends of the street a multitude of people are on the way toward the same point, which is at some distance outside the gates. But the thousands of the living are still few in this field of the dead, the most extensive that I have seen in Italy; and when they scatter, passing under the black and white arches of the entrance, among the various avenues, straight, parallel, bordered with trees and shrubs, they almost disappear, and take nothing from the sadness of the place and the occasion. The Milanese are very proud of their cemetery, as are the Genoese and the people of Messina of theirs. It must have cost many millions to the city as well as to individuals. However, if there were a competition among these funereal pleasure

grounds,—for such the Italian cemeteries are,—Milan would not, in my judgment, receive the prize. The situation of the Campo Santo at Messina, on the slope of the Sicilian mountains, overlooking the strait and the sea, its magnificent trees, its flowery stairs, would give it a signal advantage; while, on the other hand, in the number and magnificence of private chapels, the Genoese cemetery greatly surpassed this. The profusion, the prodigality of marble, at Genoa, is something incredible. Nowhere is the stone made so supple, required to represent so many family scenes, so many trained and ruffled gowns with marvellous imitation of silk, so much lace, so many young men in frock coat and tall hat, coming with their mothers to weep and pray at the father's death-bed or his tomb. Never before has marble been domesticated to this degree. But everywhere, at Milan, at Genoa, at Messina, there is the same realistic inspiration.

I follow avenues devoted to tombs of people of the middle class. There are flowers, rosebushes, honeysuckles, cut back as with us; tall night-lights in coloured glass; and always the bust, in plaster, in weather-stone, in bronze, with spectacles, if the dead man wore them; or the photograph, framed and protected by glass. These Italian cemeteries are like a great album of departed generations. Everybody's ancestors are there, with their modes of dress, their wrinkles, their warts, their smiles.

Many persons yet alive are also represented in attitudes of mourning. Some remarried widow, grown old and stout, may see herself there, in the beauty of her twenty years and the pathetic charm of her first grief. And there are curious inscriptions, such as I have already seen elsewhere, in which the grateful heir praises the dead relative for the abundant inheritance received from him: "To Pietro S., who by his business ability, his integrity, his industry, was able to increase the wealth of his family." I could quote twenty variations on this same theme.

Elsewhere charming ideas, as on the tomb of a child, where it was a mother's hand, surely, that engraved the one line: "*A rividerla, māmā!*" And extraordinary manifestations of human devotion, for instance, in letters of gold paper, pasted on black ribbon, suspended from the two arms of a cross. I had noticed, from a distance, these funereal festoons, wide and stiff, the ends lost in tufts of chrysanthemums. I approached. Two women, kneeling, gazed fixedly upon the freshly turned sand; and on the black streamer were these words: "To my murdered daughter!" This indication of cause, this alarum of vengeful passion, are they not suggestive? And does it not reveal, with this very matter-of-fact race, a soul differently constituted from ours, less disposed to idealize the image of those who are taken away, seeking the actual resemblance, the representation

of the last scene of life, while what the rest of us desire to behold is only the spiritual form, transfigured and made beautiful by death, as no one but the sculptor of genius can conceive and render it?

Some monuments of extreme richness, in the principal avenue; one especially, in bronze, attracts universal admiration. It has been recently erected to the memory of a young woman of noble family. She lies there, on a broad, low bed, nude to the waist. Her head is very beautiful, lying a little turned on the pillow, the face bearing the imprint of a new peace unknown to life: and behind her, sketched upon the panel which rises like a wall, a procession of angels, with wide-spread wings, bear the soul toward the light. This work, by the sculptor Enrico Buti, is one of the very few which go beyond the limits of mere handicraft. The groups that gather around it are almost exclusively middle-class or artisans. The latter are all in their working clothes. The women, bare-headed as a rule, wear the large shawl that sweeps so gracefully through all Italian streets and highways; the men are in blouse or jacket. It is noticeable that the Italian workman does not have his "Sunday clothes." At least there is never an appreciable difference between the aspect of the Sunday crowd and that of Monday.

The peasant women, on the contrary, never stop, or rarely, before this statue in bronze. They pass on gravely, in little bands, village

neighbours, reciting the rosary aloud as they walk, and passing through their fingers the string of beads, which hangs over their bright-coloured aprons. They no longer wear the entire costume, as we see it in books and in photographs. Alas! one must go far before he meets those marvels of popular taste, those bold, harmonious effects of costume, that painting has made-familiar to us all, which we expect to see as soon as we cross the Alps.

Graziella has but few sisters. Only once have I noticed any great multitude of Italians attired like the pictures, and this was in the depths of Calabria, on one of the Madonna festas.

But neither old buildings nor old costumes fall all at once. There lingers still in Italy a marked taste for bright-coloured stuffs, some one old article of wearing apparel, some accessory, some jewel. In the country about Milan it is the great rayed comb that the women wear at the back of the head upon their coiled hair. This is a set of long silver pins, flattened at the top, making a semicircle, of, you might say, two dozen little silver spoons, arranged fan-wise.

Leaving the Campo Santo, I went to spend an hour with one of the sculptors, of whom many, such as Enrico Buti, Ernesto Bazzari, Barcaglia, Bassaghi (who died lately), have acquired a certain reputation. He showed me a great number of works or models, most of them intended for

tombs, and denoting great flexibility of hand, a supreme comprehension of plastic truth. Still, something was lacking, almost always. As I went through the rooms with this agreeable and clever man, certainly much nearer the artist than the artisan, I had all the time a vision of that immortal girl who stands by Henri Regnault's tomb. And later I asked myself whether the Italian genius—for the time enfeebled, but in the end destined to recover strength—has not been always more realistic than the French. Even in those epochs when men's minds were lifted to the most wonderful ideals, did the Italian artists ever get far away from the portrait; ennobled I grant, made divine by the smile or by the attributes, but a portrait nevertheless? Like the Romans, their very practical ancestors, were they not always distrustful of allegory and legend, those two styles of art where Imagination has no longer any guide but herself? Have they ever dwelt, between heaven and earth, in that enchanted land where the northern races, restless and fascinated, lived and moved all through the Middle Ages? Did *Rafaëlle* ever dream of that land? The great *Buonarotti*—he who knew what it was—would probably have answered, No!

I have just seen the King and Queen for several hours, and very near. The sovereigns presided, in the presence of several hundred guests, at the inauguration of an Institute for the Blind, recently



established in the *via Vivaio*. The buildings, entirely new, whose construction is due to the bequest of a Milanese, open upon a narrow street in a populous quarter. They are very large, and cheerful in colour—uselessly so, alas! for their inmates—and of that handsome style which requires porticos, cornices, cloisters, broad staircases. The Italians too often sacrifice to this the comfort of their houses, but here they have not done so. The blind will be most pleasantly lodged. We enter through a gate into a court-yard, and then through a vestibule, adorned with columns, into a frescoed hall for receptions and entertainments. The workrooms for men and women surround it.

The King arrives first, from Monza, in a very ordinary two-horse landau. He wears a frock-coat and silk hat. The presentations being made, everyone resumes his hat by the royal command; and the King begins to chat with the Milanese authorities and the managers of the new Institute, remaining in the vestibule, where the cold outdoor air circulates freely. I remark no excessive attention on the part of those who surround him. He talks to each, in very short sentences, speaking low, with a frequent lifting of the chin. His attitude is altogether military; and it is easy to see that he likes to talk standing, his chest well thrown out, taking a step or two now and then, a habit which he maintains in the court receptions, and one of which the very young diplomats do not

complain. His moustache is formidable, less so than on the coins, however; but his glance, a little singular in its fixedness, has nothing severe. King Humbert's popularity increased much after the cholera at Naples, and he is aware of this fact.

Ten minutes later there is a stir in the crowd massed outside; and a carriage with four horses and postilions draws up at the steps. The Queen descends, and enters on the King's arm, between the double row of guests. She wears a Medici collar of black velvet, a hat of black velvet with large plumes, and a dark-blue silk gown. The double row salutes; the Queen smiles, and her smile is famous, we know. Also, she has long golden eyelashes, which give a charm to her look. A lady of honour follows her. And the two sovereigns begin that official rôle which habit may render easy but cannot make amusing.

They listen to the address of a venerable gentleman; then to music; then to a compliment from one of the blind; and then to music again. Then they must make the complete circuit of the new building, and submit to explanations of things in themselves already comprehensible. I follow with the crowd of guests, who knock against corners of doors, block up corridors, and fill in advance the halls through which royalty must pass. It is curious, this silent and eager crowd. Evidently it represents the high Milanese society. Everywhere around me a pleasant, well-bred mur-

mur of Italian words, with discreet smiles, and now and then a ceremonious presentation; very refined faces of girls and young women, and those liquid eyes so rapidly changing in their expression. But almost no toilet; gray, mauve, or blue wraps, and street bonnets. At Paris, for a negro prince, the women would have besieged Worth and Redfern. Here they go in the simplest attire. Most of the men wear derby hats. However, too rapid conclusions must not be drawn; for in the evening all this is changed, as if by enchantment, and Milan is, perhaps, with Rome, the city of Italy where one sees, under the light of chandeliers, the greatest display of dress and jewels.

Still another thing surprises—the almost complete absence of uniforms, barriers, and police. The white plume of an aide-de-camp is moving about among the groups; a *questurino*, in his belted tunic, demands passage for the King and Queen; but the person of the sovereigns seems entirely unguarded. They are approached, they are surrounded, as in a drawing room, where all the guests are known, and have been presented.

The Queen stops in one of the schoolrooms, desires a young girl to write the name Margherita di Savoia, desires another to read aloud from a book with raised letters, admires the sewing or the embroidery of a third. She is admirably apt at her difficult trade of queen. No one could better or more courteously ask questions, express her

thanks, appear to take an interest in everything. And this smiling visit to the poor timid children touches the looker-on like an act of charity, and as a thing extremely well done, especially when the listener can follow this little distribution of questions, which is like a distribution of prizes, asked in a musical voice and with the expressive and natural pantomime of these Italian fingers of hers, which speak as clearly as her lips do.

Meanwhile, the King resignedly talks with many persons of importance, and again and again with the Abbé Vitali, a priest of kind heart and good head, it appears, who is director of this institute, and composer of the cantata just now rendered.

Il tuo spirito, o regina eccelsa e buona,  
È ovunque, e dolce il nome tuo risuona ;  
Ma dove più gentil corre il tuo cuore  
È, dove sta il dolore.

All the Italian world lives on this footing of intimate diplomacy. I have been told that at Genoa, during the centenary celebration, the royal launch was surrounded by boats of every description, crowded with the inquisitive of all ranks and races; and that, again and again, strangers, men of the people evidently, were near enough to touch the King on the shoulder or his arm, saying "*Buona sera, maestà!*"

I left before the ceremony was ended. On the steps a court footman in scarlet livery was talking

soberly with the first postilion, motionless upon his horse, proud of his red frogged jacket, his yellow breeches, his post-boots, his whip with its ornament of badger's hair; and the two now and then, without turning their heads, cast a protecting glance at the small-fry clinging to the railing.

A hundred paces distant, the suburb had its every-day aspect. Ragged shirts hung drying from high windows, women were gossiping on door-sills, more numerous where the sun shone. Only there were *questurini* directing the fig-sellers into adjacent lanes, to keep the street free.

I had not reached home when the Queen's carriage passed, the four horses prancing and shaking their bells. All the fiacres stopped and drew up in line by the houses; almost all the shopkeepers, the men working on the road, the coachmen, raised their hats; but no one shouted; and, as I was surprised at this, a friend said to me: "We are monarchists here; but we are not courtiers." ✓

The Milanese have, moreover, a very high idea of this city, "the moral capital of Italy," a city of art and music, a publishing city like Turin, a commercial centre like Genoa, a rich and growing city, they say, but where capital is prudent, and will not venture forth at the present time. The truth is that Milan came very near being caught and having its crash like Rome. There was the same frenzy for building at about the same time. But the Milanese knew how to stop in time; and

their new quarter has not the deplorable aspect of the Roman *prati di castello*. It is even very pleasant to see. If you wish to visit it, stand in front of the Cathedral, then go straight away from this point; the boulevard, via Dante, is cut through the ancient streets, and bordered with new dwelling-houses on the way to the Theatre dal Verme. Further on, large apartment houses are built, or are in process of construction. The Castle of the Visconti, partly demolished, gives up the approaches to the old parade-ground to the builders of the future; and the central pavilion, surrounded by trees and gardens, will remain alone, with its crenelated ramparts, in the midst of an immense region of modern habitations. This work is going on slowly and prudently, as I have said, but nothing is more curious than the part of the programme already completed—this via Dante, built at a time of bold speculation. How many millions has it cost? I cannot say. The municipality had offered a prize of ten thousand lire [two thousand dollars] to him who should build the finest house; and, less for the prize than for the honour of gaining this mural crown, the architects spared no pains in devising, and the owners no money in executing. Mutually stimulating each other, their strife became epic; and as each one of these great houses must have the same number of stories, the rivalry was limited to a competition in façades.

Doors and windows of every kind, every variety of balcony; all the types of caryatides, rosettes, and brackets; all possible coatings, casings, mouldings, medallions, capitals, and chimney-pots, meet and neighbour each other in a very droll fashion. There are façades painted in Renaissance *grisaille*. ✓ There is one covered with painting—in oil-colours, I believe—incontestably modern; on a sofa, whence springs a palm tree with drooping leaves, a gentleman in a scarlet coat, his face turned toward the street, appears to be awaiting an answer from a young woman in white ball-dress, who is looking toward the Castle of the Visconti.

One must not be too critical. Not all the details are harmonious. They could not be so; but the general effect of these houses, forming one of the broadest streets of Milan, does not lack grandeur. The light tints of the washes and stuccos harmonize and blend well. When there is sunshine, all these new, fresh things seem to laugh among themselves. Add to this that the rents are not high. I made inquiry, and learned that a second floor, consisting of ten or twelve rooms, can be had for two or three thousand lire [four to six hundred dollars].

For all that, there is no great demand for apartments in this fine via Dante. Plenty of placards hang from the carved balconies: *Si loca; Affittasi piano nobile*. They will disappear in time. But I think that a second competition, were it pro-

posed, would not be received with the same enthusiasm.

I forgot to say that the municipality, doubtless embarrassed with too much to choose from, has not been able to come to a decision about the prize; which, at least, has been an economy to the administration.

I am here in the height of an electoral campaign. The walls are covered with placards, in which committees "for peace," others who are "for war" (but do not say so), groups of veterans from the wars of independence, labour unions, and agricultural unions recommend their candidates to the voter who passes by. The bill-sticker has respect for nothing, neither for private dwellings nor public edifices. He puts up his posters everywhere, on new columns, inside of passages, in the colonnades of mayors' offices, on carved or polished walls—it is all one to him. "They come off so easy with hot water and a brush," an Italian said to me. And, indeed, I have seen the brush obliged to do its work even in the handsome *Galeria di Principe Umberto*, at Naples.

Public meetings are equally abundant, with more or less enthusiasm, but without serious disturbances. I do not think there is a country in the world where men talk politics more, or with more apparent ardour, but with more real indifference at heart. You enter a restaurant: near you are two gentlemen, one who is eating his break-



fast, the other standing before the table, his cigar lighted, a long black cigar with a straw running through it. They talk politics; chiefly they discuss a local candidacy. It is perfectly easy to follow the conversation, for they talk in loud voices, as if addressing the public. At first an aphorism or two of rather colourless character, backed up by a "*carissimo*." We may suppose they have seen each other at least twice before. The reply comes, a little more animated. The gentleman standing rejoins: "*Permesso! La questione è questa——*" And then, with extraordinary vehemence, with vigorous and appropriate gestures, with changes of expression in his face that an orator would not consider unworthy, he argues the case, he becomes excited over it. The retort can scarcely make itself heard. It is short, as is to be expected from a man eating his breakfast, but fiery. Both seem much excited. You wonder what will be the end, and whether the intoxication of talking and the presence of an audience may not carry one or the other too far.

After fifteen minutes, the one who is standing holds out his hand. "Good-bye, my dear fellow; I must go; I have something to attend to." He is perfectly calm. His cigar has not gone out. He leaves the room with the utmost tranquillity. The other begins on his second course. No one in the hall has been in the least disturbed.

Then you discover that these two men, who

seemed to be in such a state of excitement, were really not so at all; that they were talking only for effect. They tried (if I may be pardoned for saying it) to bamboozle each other. They were unsuccessful. But they remain friendly and quite ready to agree at another time, for there was no serious principle involved; there were only personal preferences and momentary interests.

This little scene, almost of daily occurrence, aids in understanding the excitement of talk, and the tranquillity of the streets. It explains the fluidity of Italian parties, impossible to class, unexpectedly increased or diminished at each other's expense, making one think of communicating vases that are separated only by a bit of gauze.

I have read, of course, innumerable statements of opinion, reports of electoral meetings, harangues, and letters to voters. It is well known that the Italians retain in their literary language the broad, sonorous periods of the ancients. Many are past masters of this art: De Amicis, for instance, in the novel, and many candidates for the Chambers, in their public addresses; so that one may read the former or listen to the latter, running on for more than five minutes without coming to a full stop. These men are ruled by the continuous Latin tradition, from which we have made our escape, and also by their temperament, all logic and moderation, which finds in this amplitude of development the means of presenting the idea with

the necessary ornaments, commentaries, objections, and abatements. We bring our thoughts into a few words, exact, vibrating, sometimes overstating the idea. They prefer to extend their wall, and get in a number of subordinate propositions, like so many gates of exit. This is all I have to say as to manner.

✍ As to matter, three things have especially attracted my notice. First, the Italians—and I refer to the mass of the community—seem to me much more apt at theory and generalization than the French. Read the political pamphlets which are so numerous in Italy. General considerations occupy the principal place in them. A French audience could not endure so much theory without illustration. Listen to public speakers, and you will be surprised at the philosophic note, less frequent, but more remarkable from a candidate addressing voters.

Notice, for instance, one of the most celebrated Italians of the day, Ruggiero Bonghi, orator, political economist, deputy, editor of a review. He presents himself before the voters of Lucera. What a failure he would have made if he had addressed a similar audience in France! "Character is something intellectual and civil," he says; "it consists, above all things, in having the mind and heart filled with the thought and love of the public welfare, without any self-interest whatever. Character consists in keeping one's judgment free,

and never suffering one's self to be swayed either by passion or selfishness. Character requires that, up to a certain point, a man should be independent of himself. Character——" And he goes on in this way for a dozen lines or more. And he was elected!

Elsewhere, at Cesena, in Romagna, Dr. Antonio Alfredo Comandini declares that "the decline of Italy must be attributed to the predominance of material interests over ideas. Let these ideas, then, be translated into practical duties by abandoning the system of negations, a source of sterile conflicts and continual disappointments." Did his audience understand this? Probably they did, for this man also was elected. And he carried literary audacity in a political speech so far as to quote, a little farther on, the twenty-seventh canto of Dante's "*Inferno*"! ✓

A second point, very remarkable in the public addresses of the Italians, is the continual allusion to France. We meet this everywhere. And generally it is not hostile. Frequently, even, it assumes a tone of cordiality. "I wish," said a Milanese candidate, "that our relations with France might become friendly. I wish especially that men who remember Magenta and Solferino would interest themselves in this." "It is not," said another, "at all becoming to us, who owe so much to France, and are bound to her by ties of national brotherhood, to talk about ideas of revenge held

by the French." I know that we meet language less friendly. I know that it is very possible, also, on the other hand, to attribute these advances to perfectly evident motives of self-interest. This is true; the Italians themselves say it. They suffer heavily from the breaking off of commercial treaties, and their great desire is to be once more in economic favour with France. But to make this a definition of the mental condition of the Italians toward the French would be at once too simple and unjust. Analyzing it, after the manner of the chemist, I fancy we should find something like the following results:

Memory of wars from Francis I. to Napoleon ( <i>hostile</i> ),	10
Natural race affinities, Latin tendencies ( <i>favourable</i> ),	15
Gratitude toward France for services rendered ( <i>favourable</i> ),	5
Memory of the expedition into Tunis and the attacks of the	
French press, sarcasms, epigrams ( <i>hostile</i> ),	25
Desire to resume commercial relations ( <i>favourable</i> ),	30
Prejudices on account of the Triple Alliance ( <i>hostile</i> ),	15
	<hr/>
	100

The proportions vary, doubtless, in different men; the balance is disturbed only slightly, as a rule, in one direction or the other; the elements themselves scarcely ever are wanting. They form a most extraordinary compound, giving the French political enemies, who are ardent admirers of the French character and genius and very sincere advocates of the necessity of a commercial reconciliation with France, while at the

same time they are advocates of the necessity of keeping up the German alliances. The mind is on one side, the heart often on the other; and conversations on these subjects assume a singular air of paradox, to which I shall again refer.

Lastly, candidates for the office of deputy are very careful not to neglect the grave Italian question, the financial one; and the manner in which they treat this merits a rapid examination. Their addresses generally are upon these topics: Italian parties, the economic conditions of the country, finance, social laws, alliances, the future. On this last point all agree—the future! Let but the speaker's advice be followed, and there will be liberty, prosperity, progress, national glory. But how different are the methods, how diverse the advice as to the road to be followed! Until very lately only a few public men have ventured to recommend the reduction of the military expences, and to allow it to be understood, without expressly saying this, that it would be well to loosen, if not to break, the burdensome tie that unites the country to the two empires of central Europe. At the last elections, however, this opinion, which had already gained some ground, found many supporters, of whom the most eloquent and the most authoritative seems to me to be Signor Giuseppe Colombo, deputy from Milan, and formerly Minister of Finance in the Rudini cabinet.

Signor Colombo belongs to the party of Liberal

Conservatives. I had the honour to meet him. About fifty years old, tall, slender, with regular features, deep-set eyes under prominent eyebrows, a full, grayish, pointed beard, a serious, energetic face, an easy speaker. In seeing him and listening to him, I had the feeling that in France he would have been the leader of a party. In Italy I do not know how influential he is, but the speech he made before his constituents was an event in the peninsula, and seemed to me that of a man very well informed, very brave, and very patriotic. I will quote only short sentences of permanent interest. "I believe," he said, "that if we in Italy do not settle, absolutely and at once, the financial question, we are hastening towards a very sad future." Whence comes the danger? From two great causes, the excessive military expenses, and the heavy guarantees given to the Italian railways. The deficit is now 75,000,000 [\$15,000,000]. It will be 190,000,000 in the year 1900, if things go on as they are. Now, there is but one remedy. "The lack of capital leaves a great part of the soil unproductive. Italy, *alma parens frugum*, cannot even raise all the grain which she needs, which keeps her more than 1,000,000,000 bushels behind France." Is it possible, in conditions like these, to increase the taxes? Is it possible to think of laying heavier burdens upon the taxpayers, "when the land-tax, with its extras, absorbs a third of the income, when the tax on

houses reaches in some cases 80 per cent., and the tax on securities 20 per cent."? There must then be a reduction of expenses. This is inevitable. "Two, three, four ministries may fall; but the day will surely come when the government, in whatever hands it may be, will be compelled to this." Economies must be made under several heads, notably in the matter of public works, and in salaries. Let there be abolished certain "offices too numerous in the Italian administration, which is entirely based on distrust." Let the administrative machinery be simplified. "The local administration consists of 69 prefectures, 137 subprefectures, 58 commissariats, and 69 superintendances; the judiciary has 4 high courts of appeal, 23 courts of first appeal, and 161 lower courts; we have 21 universities and 11 institutes of higher instruction. Only between Piacenza and Bologna, that is to say a distance of eighty-five miles, which is made in two hours and a quarter, and for a little more than 500,000 inhabitants, there are 5 prefectures, 8 sub-prefectures, 5 superintendents' offices, 5 courts of appeal, 3 universities, 3 institutes of fine arts, a school of engineers, and a scientific academy. Do you suppose that nothing can be done to simplify this organization, which costs us 60,000,000 [\$12,000,000]? We are the slaves of habit, hostile to great reforms. We do not comprehend that it is our duty, after having melted together



all the little states that formed Italy before 1859, to make a new Italy, and establish the administration on a rational basis, taking into account the natural divisions of the country and proscribing the interference of the state in local affairs, except so far as the general interests of the nation are involved in them."

But the grand economy must be sought in the war department. "The country does not feel," said the Milanese deputy, "that the present extent of our armaments is a necessary condition of our alliances, for Austria is also a member of the Triple Alliance. She is perhaps even more exposed than we; but she is able to reconcile the demands of her foreign policy with her own resources, spending relatively less than we do, her population and wealth being taken into account. . . . Each does what he is able to do, and no one should require us to equal the armaments of nations richer than we, and to plunge deeper into ruin, year by year, through a mistaken sentiment of self-respect. . . . No, we cannot continue to follow Europe in this great madness, which takes away annually four million young men and five milliards of money from the wealth of the nations. Let us hope that Europe will grow wiser. But let us begin by showing ourselves wise—we, who have such need of men and of money to cultivate our lands and to avoid the disgrace, while we are thus arming ourselves to the teeth, of being obliged to

ask—we, an agricultural nation—to ask from Russia, from Hungary, from America the grain that we are not able to produce!”

The reply, for there is one, to the speech of Signor Colombo was Signor Giolitti's speech at Rome. Coming from a prime minister, it must, of course, be optimistic, and such it was, frankly, broadly. Signor Giolitti denied that the deficit was 75,000,000. I have always admired the suppleness of official mathematics! He defended the military expenses, defended the alliances of Italy, and drew an eloquent picture of the country's progress. “In Italy, since 1861, we have built 7000 miles of railway, 1500 miles of steam tramways, 18,600 miles of road; the state has expended more than 200,000,000 [\$40,000,000] in special maritime works, and 65,000,000 [\$13,000,000] in betterments; we have strongly fortified the frontiers, formerly unprotected; we have furnished arms to our troops; we have absolutely created a navy, to-day the third in the world; we have reconstructed our great cities from a hygienic point of view; we have erected buildings for schools and barracks for soldiers, and have begun on prison reform. During the same time the population of the kingdom, over its present territory, has increased 5,000,000; the primary schools, which formerly had 1,000,000 pupils, have now 2,500,000; the postal revenue was formerly 12,000,000, it is now 44,000,000; there were 355 telegraph offices, there are now 4500.

International commerce—exports and imports—amounted to a value of 5,000,000 lire [\$1,000,000], it has increased to 14,000,000; coasting vessels have increased from a tonnage of 8,000,000 to one of 33,000,000; the amount of charcoal used in the kingdom has been augmented from 446,000 tons to 4,350,000. The invested funds of charitable enterprises have increased by 800,000,000 [\$160,000,000]; societies for mutual assistance, then 440 in number, are now 5000; co-operative societies of production and consumption, hitherto unknown in Italy, now number 1300; deposits in savings banks, which, in 1872, were 465,000,000 [\$93,000,000], are now 1,789,000,000 [\$357,800,000].”

Notwithstanding all this, as I still remained under the impression of certain of Signor Colombo's arguments, I broached the subject to my friend, the Marquis B., in the park of one of his villas, near Bologna. We were walking under the elms and plane trees which make a little island of verdure in the midst of the cultivated plain, with its interminable rows of small mulberry trees. Again I see that golden haze of late autumn, fatal to vegetation, which sheds over the land something of the deep silence of snowy days. It was so peaceful, and I was feeling so great a pleasure in again meeting this high-minded man, in asking him questions and listening to his replies, always rapid, clever, and thoughtful, that, almost by accident, and without change of tone, I spoke of what I had heard in Milan.

But my friend took it very differently. Scarcely had I made allusion to these "counsels of reflection" and of everyday prudence, when a shiver seemed to run over him. His eyes blazed with keen excitement. "You believe this?" he said to me. "How can you credit these dismal forebodings? The deficit! Is anybody going to believe that Italy is bankrupt because we have a deficit of 20,000,000 lire? But remember we have had one of 500,000,000; remember that exchange was once twenty per cent.; that the Austrians held Venetia; and that we came out of that crisis with honour, as we shall out of this!"

A little later, in Rome, I was breakfasting with a deputy belonging by birth to the Italian aristocracy, but by mental tendencies very near to the most advanced groups in the Chamber; a man wary and brilliant, who at one time held the dangerous diplomatic post of envoy to the King of Abyssinia, and accomplished that mission successfully. The same question came up, I know not how. He stretched his hand out carelessly, the shut fingers opening, one by one, as if to present the argument:

"I know," he said, "and everybody in Italy knows, that we spend a little too much. *Dio mio!* the nations around us—are they not doing the same thing, more or less?"

"That is true; but——"

"But we are not so rich as they are? Yes, I

know that. Nevertheless, please to observe that our security, perhaps, and certainly our pride, require us to go on imitating our neighbours. Tell me, would you go to a grand reception in a cut-away coat when everybody else was in evening dress?"

"Perhaps so."

"Certainly not! You would be ridiculed, you would not go."

"Excuse me, I would go if I were sure of being there the next time with my silk facings!"

He made no reply. And I saw by these two signs, and by many others, that the ideas of Signor Colombo were as yet very far from being accepted in high Italian society.

#### VICENZA.

It was very pretty, this evening, the little city where so many strangers—who are much in the wrong—fail to stop. It had that ancient, romantic aspect which Italian cities so readily assume in the moonlight, when the shadows are deep under the porticos, passers-by infrequent, the gildings on the signboards effaced, and the new houses seem to blend into a hazy mass and leave more clear the beautiful lines of gray stone, the projecting festoons, the balconies of wrought iron, and the overhanging roofs of the old palaces; but nothing was comparable to the Piazza della Signoria, built almost entirely by Palladio, and the Palazzo della

Consiglio, so light with its two rows of arcades, the town hall with its red tower that might have been brought from Venice and its two columns with the winged lion of S. Mark. There was more daylight and also more animation there than elsewhere; and to-day was election day. In the lofty halls of the Palazzo della Ragione the results of the vote were proclaimed, and the talking or the applause from the unseen crowd spread now and then into the almost deserted space where, in the soft light, we, Senator L., Antonio Fogazzaro the poet, and myself, were walking back and forth.

Whoever has not experienced Italian hospitality will do well to make trial of it before finally deciding as to the character of our neighbours. It is particularly cordial and friendly, and one of the most attractive traits in the national character. The Italians pride themselves upon it. As a Florentine said to me, they know and feel themselves the heirs of a very ancient race, habituated to receive the visits of strangers from every nation; and, besides, they take great pleasure in making known, admired, and loved that special corner of the country in which they themselves dwell.

Oh! this affection for home, for a man's native city; this pride in its past, this devotion to the great men and the works of art of little places that are scarcely mentioned in the guidebooks, rarely named in history! How vital these sentiments are; how constantly we meet them; how

much influence they possess in human hearts! Consider Fogazzaro. He is an author famous in Italy, both in prose and verse. His works have been translated into German, English, Swedish, Dutch, and Russian. His *Daniele Cortis*, opulent, eloquent, full of observation, may be mentioned as one of the most remarkable works of modern Italian literature. *The Mystery of a Poet* was published in French not long ago. Now this man, who in the great cities would find more literary society, who would find admirers and many of the conditions of work and success, has no inclination to leave home; he lives, and he prefers to live, in Vicenza or its neighbourhood, among the Colli Berici, with their exquisite outlook over the fair country. To see him, tall and vigorous, in his brown cloak and broad-brimmed hat, a kind smile coming and going under his heavy grayish moustache, you would take him for a gentleman farmer. He has the tastes of one. It has been proposed to him to be a candidate for deputy, but he has never been willing to do so. Little municipal offices please him, however. He fills half a dozen of them with delight, presides over academies, administers the property of a charitable institution, abandons himself to the study of the theory of evolution even to the neglect of literature. When I express surprise, he quotes to me the example of Renato Fucini, like himself an author of high merit, whose Tuscan poetry and letters on Naples I have read

with much pleasure; Fucini, who began life as an engineer in Florence, and then returned to his native province, near Empoli, where he holds the office of primary inspector. "He is very happy there," says Fogazzaro. "Giosuè Carducci paid him a visit recently." The country, the welfare of one's fellow-citizens, the general respect of his townsmen, and sometimes a visit from a literary comrade of another province—this is the ideal of life for a noble class of men in Italy.

At dinner the senator's family were gathered about him. His two sons and their wives, his daughter and her husband, all live under his roof. The eldest son is occupied with agriculture; the second is deputy to a justice of the peace; the latter's wife is a charming Venetian who, even after many years' absence, remembers with a shade of regret the wide horizons of her native city, the vast heavens reflected in the lagoons. All this group is most harmonious, simple, and sincere. The guest who comes in is at once received into a gratifying intimacy. He is welcomed as already a friend. What is his opinion of Italy and of our dear Vicenza? His first impression, by moonlight—was it favorable? Does he like roast chaffinches on toast, which are a Venetian dish? What beautiful things he shall see to-morrow, if the weather is fair!

There is much talk about the elections, of which some of the results are already known. Now and



then a servant enters with a note or a telegram announcing the success or the failure of a friend. Then follow general outcries of delight or regret. The senator takes his pencil, and on a page from his notebook writes his reply, a sentence well-turned, terse, graceful, which he reads aloud to the family before giving it to the servant—real masterpieces, these, of the lapidary style so dear to the Italians. They relish a well-phrased note, they read it over again; they read it aloud, the better to enjoy its musical cadence. “How well that is said!” they exclaim, and pass the little page from hand to hand, like a full *bonbonnière*.

It is evident that the senator excels in this dainty art. He is a scholar, a man of amiable disposition, and of incredible industry. At the age of forty he was called to the Senate by the King; and in the twenty years that have passed since then, few of his colleagues have been more punctual or industrious than he. When he is at Rome he may be said to live in the Senate-house. Everybody knows him and has seen him, his frock-coat buttoned tight, his figure alert, his kindly face framed in his old-fashioned white whiskers, his placid smile as of a man who has had his life, his brilliant eyes full of intellect, and, in the street, always a silk hat—“The last in Vicenza!” he says. This evening he presides at his table, seated at one end, and joins in the conversation even while inditing his notes.

"Signor Senatore, you are, I believe, an officer of the SS. Maurizio e Lazzaro?"

"And grand officer of the Crown of Italy."

"But you do not wear the insignia?"

"No. My buttonhole is silent; and so is my visiting card. And you say so much about Italian vanity! We do not wear our decorations. Even at court, in ordinary receptions, the national orders are not seen."

"The distinction is in *not* wearing them," adds Fogazzaro.

We talk of the Senate.

"I consider it an advantage for the country," says Signor L., "that neither senators nor deputies receive a salary. We have no other pecuniary advantage than a pass on the railways. With no more than that, there is less risk of public life becoming a trade. A man must already have a certain standing before he can seek to be elected deputy, or belong to one of the classes out of which the King appoints the senators. And, having obtained the position, a man does not altogether change his life; the lawyer remains a lawyer, the doctor retains his patients, the professor does not resign his chair."

"Yes. The Senate is in Rome; but the senators are in the country."

"That is not exactly the case. It is certain, however, that the number present is not what it would be under a different system. In the Senate

especially, there is usually only a varying minority, increased in stormy times, growing smaller when the skies are clear. This is not without disadvantages, but, on the other hand, what benefits! We do not undergo the prolonged strain of political life, of which you complain so much in France. Less tried by the parliamentary climate, we are much more in touch with the people of the country. We know far better the true state of public opinion, the wishes of the provinces, and of our own fellow citizens, while with permanent Chambers, and deputies or senators obliged to live all the year in the capital, public opinion is but an argument which all men invoke, and upon which no person can depend."

So the talk ran on, from one subject to another, in the drawing room on the ground floor, under the indulgent gaze of two family portraits, whose originals, no doubt, had had, in their time, the same wise and liberal minds, the same amiable temper. Not a word had brought us toward the subject always in mind at the present time, in any conversation between Italians and Frenchmen, of our international relations. We had talked as if we had been ten years younger, or, perhaps, ten years older. But now, as I was about to withdraw, the senator took me aside, and with extreme deliberation, smiling with manifest pleasure at the snare he was laying for me.

"My dear sir," he said, "I beg you to meditate

upon a point. Being concerned with politics, I am excusable for referring to them. I would say, then, that commercial relations with France are very useful for us—are, indeed, necessary. It is asserted that the Triple Alliance is the sole obstacle to a re-establishment of these relations. I ask you, is this true? Do you sincerely believe that the French Chamber, blindly protectionist as it is, would grant to us, even if we were not the allies of Germany and Austria, an advantage denied to nations entirely neutral? The Triple Alliance, then, has nothing to do with the affair. It should therefore be left entirely out of the account, as a foreign element, against which, besides, we can do nothing; and the question remains, would it not be wise in the interest of both nations to attempt an economic compromise, an arrangement, a reconciliation? Don't give me an answer now,—not this evening; you shall tell me what you think about it to-morrow, when we are on the road, among the Colli Berici, in the beautiful, tranquil sunlight, in the serene country!"

We made the expedition to the Colli Berici, and I can understand now how, in old times, there came to be so many hermits in this country,—clergy and laity both,—often men of high family, who built themselves a stone hut, dug a well, planted an olive tree and a dozen vines, and spent their lives there! We begin by going up a long, winding road, which is bordered, just outside the

city, by an arched portico. There are as many arches as there are beads in a rosary, and each one bears the name of some family of Vicenza who aided in the construction of the work. Passing the last arch, turning the corner of the church of the Madonna del Monte, to which this *via triumphalis* leads, we enter the garden of a private house on the crest of a hill. The alleys of this garden wind along the edge of the plateau, among clumps of shrubs of varying density, and skilfully cut away to give outlooks. Around us other low hills are covered with vines and fruit trees, yellowed by the autumn. Above all is a villa. Two yew-trees frame it with their dark-green plumes above the black trunks. Approaching, the steep ascent comes in sight tapestried with vines; then, far below, across a little stream, beyond the long meadows with their lines of trees, the city is visible, all pink in the morning mist; and beyond that, the far-off circle of the Alps, rising in terraces, heather-clad at their base and white where they touch the sky.

"Come, now," the senator said, "you shall see something quite different."

This very different thing was the "Supper of S. Gregory the Great," by Veronese, in the abandoned convent adjacent to the church. This picture, which is very suggestive of the "Supper" in the Louvre by the same painter, occupies one wall of the ancient refectory, nude and white. It was

cut to pieces in 1848 by Austrian soldiers, who made thirty-two fragments of this admirable canvas, afterward carefully restored. An inscription, which betrays the emotion, the affection, that the Italians feel for their art treasures, narrates the vandalism of the foreigner. A plan, which was shown me in an adjacent hall, reproduces the random lines of the cuts of the knife and sabre which mutilated the masterpiece.

"Those were very sad days," my host said.

"Which have left no very deep impression, it seems! You are allies now."

"Yes. Why not? We said to them, 'Cross the Alps!' They did it."

"Not as a favour!"

"We have forgotten that, and so have they. Besides, acts of wanton destruction like this were not at all frequent during the Austrian occupation, nor were they even during the war."

Half an hour later, we came to the Villa de' Nani, so called from the grotesque figures of dwarfs (*nani*) placed on its wall along the road. A true type of the Italian villa, the owner's residence separated from the guest-house, a long building where the imagination pictured some great lady's arrival, in a past century, with her retinue, her boxes, and her coaches. All the house is painted with frescos by Tiepolo; there is mythology, and there are Chinese figures, caricatures, tragic scenes, and all beautifully fresh in colour. And

around, the country is enchanting. It appears through great glazed bays, a view less extensive than that from the villa previously seen, but softer in outline and attractively homelike. Over the shrubbery of the garden, where white statues gleam here and there, are seen hillsides cultivated as vineyards and orchards, a valley going to the left, winding with the grace of a river and losing itself between other hills. The air is extremely pure; the turf is freshened and the leaves are yellowed by autumn; no noise at all except a rare shot, followed by the springing flight of a thrush or a flock of starlings.

While the Italians spend about the same length of time in the country that the French do—leaving town with the first hot weather, and not returning until December—their stay is actuated by motives somewhat different. Their villas, unlike the châteaux of France, are not adapted for numerous and gay assemblages. The hunting season is unknown in Italy. The S. Hubert is celebrated with, at most, a *salmi* of blackbirds, or a rabbit stew! But there is usually a guest or two, and more reading, more dreaming, more pedestrian expeditions, more idle hours spent on a terrace edge or in a drawing room whose windows are carefully planned for the view, enjoying the languid poetry of an autumn less rapid than that of France. Signor L. gave expression to a similar thought when he took me to Fogazzaro's house,

very near the domain of de' Nani, on the same hill and commanding the same views, and said to me as we entered the poet's study, furnished in French style, full of *bibelots*, and looking with its three windows to the Colli Berici: "Did you think it was Fogazzaro who writes poetry? You see that it is not he, it is the country that sings!"

My courteous host seemed to feel that he had not done enough in having made me his guest the night before and his companion in the morning's excursion. He made it a point to show me all Vicenza in detail. I will not dwell upon the museum, of which the guidebooks make mention; the library, where I found two priest librarians, with the aspect of monks, very learned and passionate book-lovers; the Olympic Theatre, where, at the end of the sixteenth century, "Œdipus the King," was performed; nor even upon the odd, quaint streets; for I wish to speak at some length of an institution entirely modern, the Industrial School. It was founded in imitation of the French *Écoles d'Art et Métiers*. Italy had but one, at Fermo in the Marches, when, sixteen years ago, Signor Alessandro Rossi, one of the richest manufacturers in the north, whose woollen mills at Schio give employment to five thousand people, determined to furnish his province with an institution which he had carefully studied in France, and considered of the highest importance for the development of manufactures in Italy. I remem-



ber, during a visit which I had the pleasure of making him in the mountains of Schio, with what enthusiasm he expressed himself on the subject of the school at Vicenza. He has carried out many plans for the relief of his work-people, but none has cost him more than this. I will not say in money alone, but in effort and in perseverance. It was not his idea to endow a state institution. Faithful to the decentralizing and liberal spirit which animates so many of his countrymen, he desired a local establishment having a certain autonomy, administering itself; he made a point of reserving to the founder, to the town, and to the province their very legitimate shares of influence and authority, and also inscribing among the corps of instructors the name of a chaplain—a *direttore spirituale*, as they say in Italy. After much negotiation, this was accomplished. Signor Rossi gave about 400,000 lire [\$80,000]; the government, the province, and the town pledged each a certain sum annually; and the four divide the control.

It is expressly stated in the decree recognizing and organizing the school that the *junta di vigilanza*, or executive council shall be composed of the founder, Signor Rossi, one member selected by him, and three other persons, representing severally the government, the province, and the town. It has extensive powers, this *junta*. It administers the school, votes the appropriations, deliberates on

changes in the programme, appoints the professors and the director (subject to the ministerial appropriation), fixes the salaries, and deals with matters of discipline. The director receives 8000 lire [\$1600] and his house; the professors, 4000 lire. The courses of study, at once theoretic and practical, train foremen for machine shops and factories, and engineers for railways and steamboats. After three years' study, the young men passing their examinations are licensed, and the school seeks places for them. Everything seems well ordered. The buildings, which I visited in company with the director, Signor Boccardo, son of the well-known economist, are perfectly well-kept and abundantly ventilated. Much of the machinery used in the workrooms was constructed in the school. Boys from fourteen to seventeen were at work with lathes, files, drills, all sorts of carpenters' tools, and the discipline was like that in the Italian regiments—more tolerant, more paternal than is found on our side of the Alps.

The industrial school at Vicenza is the most prosperous in the peninsula. The number of pupils increases constantly. It has risen from 78 in 1889-90, 117 in 1890-91, and 149 in 1891-92, to 160 at the beginning of the year 1892-93. The only Italian institution to be compared with it is, as I have said, that at Fermo. Elsewhere there are only special schools of much less importance—for instance, the school for plaster casts at Doccia,

near Florence; the lace schools at Rapallo, near Genoa, and at Murano, near Venice, where, as is well known, this graceful work, once so flourishing, has been revived, and furnishes a livelihood to many hundred girls and women.

*En Route.*—I have often noticed that the Italians take less pleasure than we do in speaking ill of their country. It may be because they think not quite so well of it as we do of ours. When you bring to their notice some serious fault, some manifest inferiority, they get over the matter or confess by silence only. "We have had so much to do to make ourselves recognized as a great nation," one of them said to me, "that you must not expect us now to depreciate ourselves in your eyes."

Two travellers have just entered the railway carriage. One has a furred coat; to the other furs are unknown. He is thin, like a chaser after fortune, and probably belongs to the southern provinces, of which he has the meagre, ardent type. No sooner is he seated than he begins complaining of the slowness of the train. "A bad line! We scarcely move! In France and England they do much better than this." Whereat the other Italian, sitting opposite, takes a high tone with him: "What do you say? This train is going well. Our Italian lines are as good as any in Europe. I have been in France, too. Do you call the French trains fast? Paris-Lyon, perhaps; and perhaps

the northern express. But in general I defy you to prove that they are better than ours." Then, without transition: "There is perfect security in Rome, signor, and in the Roman Campagna. You can go and come by night or day, without danger. Since you are a traveller, can you say as much of Paris?"

The man from the south began looking out of the window, and the man from the north appealed to me on the question of the train's speed. I only complained of the roughness of the road, and to this he agreed, and continued the conversation. He was a man of business, well informed on the present situation in Italy, and hopeful for the future. I formed the idea that he was a director of the Adriatic system of railways, and this rather spoiled for me his opinion on the subject; but I enjoyed the way in which he discussed Italian industry.

"You have noticed," he said, "in our railway stations, the poster representing a big woman with a shoulder belt inscribed: *Risorgimento industriale Italiano?*"

I had seen it, I said.

"It is an advertisement of a tartaric-acid factory. When a business man orders a picture for his billheads or circulars, it is usually a deep-breasted woman in floating drapery, puffed out by the wind. Often she is blowing a trumpet. The

tartaric-acid goddess has no trumpet, you may have noticed, and that is just as well. In fact, I am not very much impressed with this idea of 'the industrial revival' of a nation which has never been celebrated for its manufactures. We have a few industrial establishments, founded long ago and always prosperous, in the extreme north and west of the country. Our silk manufactures are well known. Household furniture has always been successfully made in Northern Italy. But the recent attempts to implant among us new industries have not universally prospered. Far from it. And public opinion, even, has grown wiser on this point, and begins to understand that transformations of this kind do not take place to order. I might mention, certainly, among enterprises which seem to be prosperously started, a carriage factory at Venice, another of household ironware at Sesto, near Milan, which is beginning to be a rival to the French importations. But is it reasonable to class with these, iron foundries and steel works, like Armstrong's at Pozzuoli? They employ a good number of men, it is true; but they do not constitute an industrial 'movement' or an industrial 'awakening.' To be frank, one must confess that the Italian workman is as yet untrained, and that his apprenticeship must be long. It is just as well to say at once that industrial progress among us is as yet very trifling, and that its development must

be a very difficult matter, because we lack coal, its principal tool—its essential element, up to this time.”

Since then, half a dozen competent persons have confirmed the opinion expressed by my fellow-traveller.

In talking with the Italians about their literature, you generally hear the women say that they read French novels only; men often say the same, but they add: “It is not surprising that our literature should be inferior to the French. With us, for the last forty years, all intelligent minds have been occupied with politics. The struggles for Italian unity, and then for the organization of the Italian kingdom, have drawn away from their true vocation not a few writers and poets. But now original works are beginning to be more numerous, and you will some day see Italian literature take an honourable place in Europe.”

I wish this may be so; and, indeed, you cannot study the face, the gestures, the oratorical style of many a member of the Italian parliament without being convinced that here is a poet, an artist, gone astray from his true vocation. In gaining her unity Italy has lost many great writers. And, among contemporaries, to mention but a single name, I ask myself how anyone, seeing the poetic head of Signor Zanardelli, the president of the Chamber, can doubt that this was a man born to touch the lyre?

However, it is true that, in the midst of a crowd of inferior books, and of feeble, often awkward imitations of foreign authors, the Italians have produced, in the last few years, some works of real merit, and full of promise. We are familiar with the travels of De Amicis, but with very few of his novels or short stories—his *Romanzo d'un maestro* for instance, or those two books for children, *Cuore* and *Fra scuola e casa*, of which the first, especially, has obtained in Italy an enormous success. I have before me a copy of the 136th edition. De Amicis seems to me much more original and national under this new aspect.

I will not speak of all the attempts at novels of society in its higher or lower grades, or of the demi-monde, none of which seem to have been very successful, with the exception of the *Daniele Cortis* of Fogazzaro. But the *Novelle e paese vol-dostani* of Giuseppe Giacosa; the tales of Tuscan life, *In provincia*, by Mario Pratesi; *Le veglie di Neri* by Renato Fucini, another Tuscan; *L'innocente* of Gabriele d'Annunzio, an eminent stylist, born in the Abruzzi, who has tried many literary paths; and especially the novels of Salvatore di Giacomo, of Matilda Serao, and of Verga—to whom I shall refer later, in speaking of Southern Italy—appear to me works of real value, born of that love of the native province that I have mentioned, and hence vital and full of truth and colour. Even to a foreigner it is evident that here the

Italian story-tellers have struck a vein of inexhaustible richness. If they know how to prize it, we shall have masterpieces; and they have everything to aid success—their tender and just appreciation of the sufferings of the poor, the intimate neighbourhood, almost the fusion of classes in a society less proud, at heart, and more Christian than our own, the variety in local customs, types and races, and the use of dialect—that marvellous element of colour and poetry.

Moreover there will be nothing false about it. The tradition to which Italian prose seems, fortunately, willing to return, the dialect poets had never abandoned. On their part they have been true to their vocation. They have remained the most Italian of authors, unknown outside the province whose language they spoke, familiar, sometimes coarse; but without models from outside, the expression of a humble public who give them the joy of an actual adoration in compensation for the fame to which they could not aspire. If you ask for them, their names are everywhere. In Piedmont, Arnulfo, who died some time ago; in the Milanese dialect, Ferdinando Fontana; in the dialect of Pisa—the country of pure Italian as well—Neri Tanfucio (Renato Fucini); in the Roman patois, the famous Belli, who wrote violent satires upon Gregory XVI. and Pius IX., and ended by translating the hymns of the Roman breviary; in



the patois of Naples, an incredible number of poets and song writers.

Almost all have a marked preference for the sonnet. Under this brief form, made for the expression of a single thought, there is scarcely a subject that they have not essayed. But the hero is always the same. It is the man of the people, talking, laughing and ridiculing, or weeping; and expressing himself in words admirable for their originality, wit, and intensity. It is the man of the people who is poet and critic both; and he is the hero, passing with his habitual suffering or his brief joy across the familiar stage of street or field. Let him speak! His speech is vigorous and racy. It is an ore where very precious metal is mingled with the dross. He touches the heart of his poor audience, and while the writers in the literary language copy all styles without finding their own, he unconsciously has kept alive for coming time the little branch of wild holly which will receive the graft and bear unknown flowers.

At the present time many are returning to this study of popular Italian life. Some come to it with too persistent a memory of their realistic reading or of their classical education. But love is there—love which creates works of real character. These writers love that of which they speak; they begin to understand that all the artifice of the imagination is not worth one deep word from the

soul; and at times, in reading certain novels,—thoughtful, sober, simple,—one has the feeling, which never deceives, that here is something which all the world could see, but only an Italian can write.

And also, outside of the dialects, poets are becoming more numerous. The Italian language is so easy for verse! It has so many rhymes in *a* and *o*! It is such a singing language! I doubt if there are many young men who have the “classic license”—*licenza liceale*, who have not turned a sonnet, a serenade, or an elegy. Many of these persevere—which proves their vocation—till past thirty, or even till old age. I have known men mature and settled, who live in the shade of their own lemon trees and write love verses, fiery or tender, which they print themselves on their own little printing-presses, without any desire for fame, giving the book a black cover when the collection is a sad one, and binding in white parchment the inspiration of happier days. Others try to find a place in the Reviews, which ✓ are always cautious towards lines in rhyme. I would say that Northern Italy, and particularly Venetia, is fruitful in poets, were it not that Naples might protest. “There are sixty-two in Verona alone,” said my friend F., laughing. “The memory of the immortal lovers pursues them. Trent has Giovanni Prati; Trieste, Gazzoletti and Francesco dall’ Ongaro—do you observe this

claim of Trent and Trieste? Of course you know Luigi Carrera of Venice, and the famous Giacomo Zanella, the priest of Vicenza, whose verses have a reputation in all the provinces?"

Yes, I know Zanella, and several of his rivals, and I confess I do not care very much about them. But I have read Ada Negri, a very young and very modern writer of verses, and I am enchanted.

She is perhaps twenty-two years old, was born<sup>29</sup> at Lodi, poor and brought up by a widowed and destitute mother. At eighteen she was sent as mistress of a primary school to Motta Visconti, a village on the flat bank of the Ticino, alone, without encouragement, without probable future, having read but little for want of books, but convinced of her own genius, proud, angry with life, and resolved not to be conquered by it. Two years later, Ada Negri published her first book of verses—*Fatalità*. She had derived inspiration from her immediate surroundings, her poverty, her neglected, despised, thwarted childhood. The cry of revolt that she uttered was heard, as every true cry of passion is. She had at once partisans, friends, notices, requests for work. In a short time the first edition of *Fatalità* was exhausted. And the success, I assure you, was deserved. Ada Negri is a poet. Her language is marvellous in its strength. She has a manner of speaking at once audacious yet chaste. She is not at all ignorant, and yet she remains a

young girl. We may suppose that this rebel will be consoled. But she will always be a poet, and, I think, have a place quite her own in the contemporary literature of her country. Read her sad *Autopsia*, her *Biricchino de Strada* (The Street Boy), *Popolana*, *Buon di Miseria*, *Nenia materna*, and you will be touched by the verses, so ardent, emotional, eager for life, eager for love.

After the great success which she obtained in Italy, Signorina Negri was appointed to one of the normal schools in Milan. It is understood that she is preparing a poem. Alas! when one is so young, and truly a poet! Can it be?

A great publisher—they are almost all of the North—said to me: “The cities where people read most are Turin, Milan, and Trieste. Very literary is Trieste *l’irredenta*! Germany also is a good customer. When a book has merit I sell five hundred copies in Germany, to fifty in France.”

In the booksellers’ shop windows and in the catalogues, I very often notice translations of Zola, whose Italian origin the Italians are fond of mentioning. Public favour is shared by the different works of this author very differently on the two sides of the Alps. In Italy, while *L’Assommoir*, *Pot-Bouille*, *La Terre*, have had only two, three, five editions, *Une Page d’Amour* attains its fourteenth. Is this really a matter of taste? I think not. I am inclined rather to believe that the title of the latter gave it its success with people where

love—the word and the thing—occupies so great a place, and who, to express the idea of beauty, have six words to the French one. After *Une Page d'Amour*, the Italians have been great readers of *La Débâcle*. This was an attraction of another kind. They scarcely seem to me, with a very few exceptions, to appreciate differences of style, even the greatest. I have heard many men and many women in society speak most warmly of M. Guy de Maupassant, and, almost in the same terms, of M. Fortune de Boisgobey.

Another sign. In Paris we have certain newspapers which publish “personals”; but how faint of colour compared with those which I meet here, on the fourth page of many of the most important journals! I select at random.

The passion reveals itself and grows:

“Beautiful Florentine, I thought I understood the signal of your fan. If it is so, be at the window, same hour.”

“Thanks! I hope to receive good news. Courage, my angel, my treasure, my repose!”

“Mamma’s health still prevents my return. Yet, when I gaze into the blue depths of the sky, to every star that crosses the mountains, to every breath of wind, I confide the salutation of my heart for you, O most sympathetic (*sympaticona*)!”

“Happy, and sure of your love! I wish I could live a thousand years to love you for a thousand years, ideal of my heart, sole and absolute queen,

my whole thought, my whole soul! A thousand kisses—small, medium-sized, and great (*bacini, baci, e bacioni*). I adore thee!"

Unfortunately a suspicion creeps in:

"Adored star! You amuse yourself much? But I live for you only. At least, write. This long delay makes me fear bad news. Heavens, what fear! I have doubts about an officer. . . I have frightful premonitions."

Then comes the ultimatum, sometimes brutally put:

"Very little politeness in your way of acting! If you are decided not to write to me, say so, and you shall have no more letters from me. Remember that I have never entreated the weak sex."

At last, the dismissal:

"God forgive thee thy desertion of me! Yesterday from my balcony I said this to thee. Adieu! Thou hast deceived me cruelly."

Who knows but it was this same disabused lover who advertised in the *Tribuna* of October 21: "Deceived in love, I desire to marry a young girl, a widow, or even a person of advanced years, with a small dowry."

#### PADUA.

I have always liked Padua and Bologna on account of their arcades. In Padua I also like the Chapel of S. Antonio, in the Basilica, with the tall reliefs in white marble, the most eloquent that

I have ever seen. I was on my way to visit them again,—Sansovino's "Suicide," his "Resurrection of a Child Restored to its Mother,"—when my attention was distracted by a placard affixed to one of the pillars of the gallery. This was an appeal from some committee for the purpose of erecting a statue to the memory of some hero, whose name escapes me. It began by reminding the reader that this hero had acquired immortal fame among men by sharing in the expeditions of Garibaldi; and later on depicted him enjoying in heaven the felicity of the saints. Evidently, in the mind of the writers, his service as Garibaldian was not the smallest among the merits which had entitled him to eternal bliss. "Garibaldian," said they, with unction, as in France we might say, "Member of the Society of S. Vincent de Paul." We should not have placed these ideas in juxtaposition. The Italian soul is full of contradictions to us inexplicable. Something will always prevent us from understanding it completely: our strict logic, our inaptitude for *la combinazione*. I think it was at Bologna that I saw the statue of Garibaldi's chaplain! Open any secular journal, the least religious possible, and you will see in the almanac of the day: "Ave Maria, morning, 5h. 15m.; Ave Maria, evening, 5h. 22m."

The students of the university have not yet returned. In the beautiful inner cloisters, where are carved, painted, and gilded the escutcheons of

noble students of other days, I now meet only workmen repairing the pavement, an apparitor, who kindly shows me Galileo's pulpit—a kind of *tour d'approche* in white wood that I had seen before—and the rector of this year, Signor Carlo Ferraris. Perhaps it is not generally known that the rectors of the Italian universities are selected by the corps of professors from their own number, and serve for one year only. This is a democratic idea, and not without advantages. Signor Ferraris invites me into his study. I find him courteous and well-bred. He belongs to the faculty of law, occupying the chair of statistics. This is the second year he has served as rector, having been re-elected, as have been many of his predecessors. He regrets that our French faculties have not all an annual register like the one which he gives me, wherein are most circumstantial details: the list of professors and directors, the lists of works published by them during the year, the horarium of each faculty or school, the results of examinations, the name and country of each student. “I send our register to a great many of the higher schools,” he tells me, “and I receive very few in return, particularly from France.” This thick pamphlet gives a good idea of the prosperity of the University of Padua. The number of students, which in 1884 was 1000, in 1891 was 1315. I see that the enumeration of works by the professors, on law, medicine, literature, nat-



ural sciences, mathematics, and pharmacy occupies no less than thirty pages of the register. I observe, also, as I remarked at Bologna two years ago, the very large number of free courses, given by lectures. Unfortunately, I could not attend one. "As a rule, the university opens its gates the 20th of October," Signor Ferraris said to me. "The examinations occupy a fortnight, and lessons begin early in November. This year, on account of the elections—many of our students are voters—the return to all the universities is delayed. The opening address will be on the 26th of November, and the classes will not begin until December 2." A month lost on account of the elections!

This university has evidently nothing to fear from the project often agitated, and lately brought up in Parliament, concerning which men are talking all over Italy. There is a grudge felt against the little universities, or rather the isolated faculties, which ancient and honoured traditions keep alive rather than any real service they render now. It is really a question of expense. The president of the commission, Signor Luca Beltrami, deputy from Milan, in an address before his constituents, called attention to the fact that certain universities have but a hundred students or but fifty; that faculties could be named which have only eight students, divided into four sections; and that there is one case of seven students for six courses.

Even, it appears, there is a school of engineers which has exactly five students! What is to become of you, poor Siena, whom the students call *Siena gentile*? And of you, Urbino; of you, Macerata; of you, Camerino; of you, Ferrara? Little cities, the period of the dukes is past! The shadow has lost its poetry. Men no longer climb, on mule-back, up the steep bridle-paths which lead to your winding streets. All your wealth of art no longer retains men's hearts. There is yet a little curiosity about the past; but the deep affection which attached the fathers to the walls of the old cities, to the familiar streets, to the family mansions, grows less and less with the sons to-day. Our souls are scattered abroad through the whole world. They will never return to the nest. They will let it perish, with a sigh, but without making any strong defence of it, because they have left it, and the sweetness of home is never completely recovered after one adieu. What is to be done with these cloisters where youth once laughed or dreamed—youth now buried, forgotten—whose dreams or whose laughter will never again come back to life? Will soldiers be lodged where once your masters taught the science of their day? There are not convents enough to furnish barracks now. Perhaps it will be decay, pure and simple. And that is best. There is a respect in leaving sacred things to die.

However, a friend said this to me: "Autocratic

governments have great faults, but they have it in their power to reform. Parliamentary governments depend upon deputies, who depend upon their constituents, who themselves are led by their local passions and interests. You will see that we shall abolish neither the universities, nor the sub-prefectures, nor the superfluous schools for engineers."

He was perhaps right for a time.

I admire the feeling, the singular touching pity in these four lines engraved in the wall of a palace in Padua:

Fazioni e vendette  
qui trassero Dante, 1306,  
dai Carrara da Giotto  
Ebbe men duro esilio.

I have been at a grand dinner this evening. Among the guests two officers, veterans, who made a campaign with the French. They spoke of France with a sort of civil regret, in which there was more poetic memory than affection, more reminiscence of youth than heartfelt cordiality for the comrade of other days, the conversation of a man divorced from his first wife but far from content in his second marriage. My reticence on the subject was acceptable. As a general rule, while the Italians themselves only in rare instances speak ill of their country, they do not allow you to do it at all. If they make allusion to the services rendered by France, you displease them by

dwelling upon the matter. But if they rush, as they sometimes will, into excessive praise of their own country, they take you for a fool if you believe them. When a military man says to you, "France did us great service at Solferino!" if you reply, "How brave you proved yourselves in Africa!" each will be right, and you will be excellent friends at once.

#### BOLOGNA.

My friend the senator gave me a letter to Lieutenant-General Dezza. I take a carriage, and am driven to the headquarters of the Sixth Army Corps, accompanied by two friends, one a citizen of Bologna, the other French, an infantry captain. After a delay of five minutes, we are received in the general's office, where he is standing, very tall, very broad-shouldered, with white moustache and chin tuft, in undress uniform—black jacket with turned-down collar, marked with the letter U (Umberto), without decorations, gray trousers with double red stripe, and riding boots. My friend, the Bolognese, presents us, and makes known my desire to visit the barracks. The general's face at once relaxes; he speaks to us in French. "Gentlemen," he says, "at least you cannot say we have prepared for your visit. I will give you a line to the colonel. Infantry barracks, is it not?" "Yes, general." And we set off for the ex-monastery of the Servi di Maria, where now

are quartered the Twenty-seventh of the line, near that fret-work cloister, you remember, whose columns throw so fine a shadow upon the street.

The regiment has just come in from drill. Many officers in the corridor, which is painted in oil-colour, black below, yellow above; this is much better," whispers my French companion, "than our whitewash and lampblack." The lieutenant-in-waiting, a blue scarf crosswise on his breast, takes us into the colonel's office, on the left, near the entrance. It is almost luxurious, this office, with beautiful hangings, curtains at the windows, even some works of art. And the colonel, Cavaliere Pittaluga, is the most affable of men. He is of the true soldierly type, slender and alert, with blue eyes. "Gentlemen," he says, "I was received in Corsica most courteously. I, too, have visited barracks; and I shall try to repay to you what was done for me. I will be your guide. Come!" We enter the officers' reading room, where there are only military journals—the library is at headquarters, and then the dining room, where the table is laid for eight persons. "This is not the custom in all regiments," the colonel says. "It is always my wish to have my officers mess in the barracks with me, when it is agreeable to them; and their expenses are very moderate. Bring some vermouth, please," he adds, addressing the lieutenant-in-waiting. The Turin vermouth being brought in, the colonel lifts his glass; and, since he is Italian,

that is to say, clever in finely shading things, "To the brotherhood of arms!" he says, and a friendly smile tempers and softens the forced reserve of his words. We enter the fencing hall, which is not large, but has been decorated by soldiers who have talent and the inventive faculty. They have depicted on the walls all sorts of original military motifs, well designed, like the artist-artisans that they are. The colonel tells us that he never has occasion to resort to civilian labour for any of the interior fittings of the barracks.

The kitchens seem to be well managed. In the non-commissioned officers' refectory, adjacent to their sitting room, four tables, of which one is for the staff. The ordinary is not the same as in France. In the morning, soup, a dish of meat, and cheese; at night, soup, two courses of meat, and dessert; besides this, wine at each meal, and they pay a lira and five centesimi [twenty-one cents] a day. The soldiers, who have 250 grammes [about a half pound] of meat in the morning, at night have only macaroni, with soup, and seem in good condition. But how different their faces from those of the French soldiers! I looked at them in the courts and the apartments through which we passed. While their officers were talking, they, correct, irreproachable in appearance, had not even the air of perceiving visitors, unaccustomed to it as they must have been. None of those comic looks which our common soldier casts,

as he passes the stranger; no laughter behind doors; no loud calls to one another; none of those jokes flung across from window to window, as if by accident, scarcely restrained even by the presence of very high officers. These Italians are gentle, docile, inclined to melancholy. Most of them seem very young, the beard not yet grown. As the colonel passed, they came to attention, and saluted calmly, deliberately; and when he had gone by they did not feel that need of words and movement which a five-minute restraint calls forth in the French.

The officers are gentle with their men. "What a good work it is," the colonel said as he went upstairs to the dormitories, "especially in my grade, to have charge of a regiment, to watch over the bodies and souls of one's men! I know nothing more interesting or nobler." He said this with great simplicity and an air of conviction. At the entrance of the room of Company 6 an old captain, who had heard us coming, stood, his hand at his cap. He was one of those men—we have all known such—who put all their life and thoughts into their profession; enthusiastic, a martinet, good at heart, but very formidable in manner. The colonel shakes hands with him. "You see, gentlemen, I am so fortunate in my captains that I leave them complete liberty as to the 'stowage' of effects. What you will see here is this man's taste." Upon which the old captain

saluted, much gratified. Decidedly, this is a very good man for a colonel. The room of the 6th is neat, like the whole barracks. The beds are not very numerous, for the effective force is kept low. They are of iron, shaped like an X, and folded up lengthwise. My friend, who understands these matters, avers that the stowage for the 6th is excellent. Their clothing, which the soldiers keep on a shelf, as our men do, is arranged with perfect regularity, not an inch out of line in either direction—above, the knapsack; below, the canteen, shaped like a little funnel. But the men have less clothing than ours. The bread, which we taste, is inferior to that of the French soldiers; and the magazines, with supplies for mobilization, do not seem to contain any great store of food. But it is possible we did not see all.

As we were taking leave of the colonel, he showed us three doors barred with iron, opening on the entrance hall. "You can guess," he said; "can you not? When I took possession here, there were inscriptions above them, indicating that they were prison rooms. I could not tolerate the idea. It was most unfortunate for the soldier, on his arrival, to be made to feel that here was a jail, or at least a place where he would be unhappy, and would suffer punishment. I effaced all the inscriptions with my own hand that very day."

We went away, finally, with favourable impressions; and it would be well if certain persons



whose ready-made opinion forbids study of the progress in military affairs made by other nations, men who always speak in very slighting terms of the Italian army, could have seen what we did.

When we asked from what parts of Italy came the soldiers of the Twenty-seventh Regiment, the answer was: "From Leghorn, Udine, and Messina." Now, Leghorn belongs to northern Italy, Udine to central, and Messina to southern. Each Italian corps (except the twenty-two battalions of Alpinists, exclusively composed of men from the northern frontier), is thus recruited from one or two districts in each one of three great territorial zones. In the same regiment, in the same company, men of different provinces meet and live side by side for three years. And not only the soldiers of the active army, but the reserves, are grouped on the same principle. In case of mobilization, Sicilians would go to join their regiments in Lombardy, and Piedmontese in Calabria. The system is loaded with disadvantages, but its reason is apparent: the recruiting was organized thus in order to fuse the different elements, and no objection could prevail against the wish to complete, in the army, the unification of Italy. Has this attempt been successful?

Beyond doubt, the fusion has begun. Sectional rivalries are no longer what they were. The interior frontiers of the Italy of former times grow

less conspicuous day by day. But the work is far from being finished. If you question anyone whom you meet as to his nationality, using only the most general terms that the language affords, he will say: "I am a Piedmontese, a Venetian, a Calabrian, a Sicilian." He will not say: "I am an Italian." In speaking of marriages, of commerce, or of politics, the inhabitant of some duchy or kingdom of former days will speak of a neighbouring province without the fraternal feeling. A Neapolitan will say, for example: "I do not like to go to Rome. Those Romans treat you like a foreigner."

But differences are especially noticeable—and I do not hesitate to assert that a trace of actual animosity still exists—between the men of the north and those of the south; between the rich, industrious north and the poor south; between the reflecting north and the talkative south; between the Milanese who has his villa on the shore of Lago Maggiore, and the Messenian who has an electoral fief in the mountains of Sicily. I add a few words, picked up here and there, which have struck me.

A rich merchant of the north said to me: "Napoleon had the right idea: a kingdom of upper Italy, a kingdom of lower Italy. They are two territories that cannot have the same institutions."

A Piedmontese: "We are too *long* a country.

The head and tail can never touch; or, if they are forced to it, the head will bite the tail."

Another: "Do you know what is one of the principal obstacles to the republican propaganda in our country? It is that the man preaching revolution must be a native of some province. And that is enough to render him unpopular in all the others! Imagine a man from the Marches preaching to a Calabrian!"

A Florentine: "You are much more centralized in France than we are. At the same time, we are so ourselves far more than is good for us. Among the great people in all the provinces, here in Florence, in Rome, Naples, Palermo, if French is not spoken, the language used is a patois. The pure Italian is neglected. By this slow and gentle procedure we protest indirectly against the excessive unity that many people would force upon us. Signor Crispi had an intention of founding an academy of dialects at Rome. Time failed him to carry out this very original idea, but he appreciated the vitality of the provincial languages, and you may be sure that in this persistence of dialect, in high society especially, there is a very deep sentiment of pride and of independence."

Now, all those who spoke to me in this way were partisans of Italian unity. They called my attention to this fact, saying that while political unity was indeed a good thing, varieties of life and

humour, local traditions, the dignity of the towns, were also good things.

This evening I wandered in the old quarter of Bologna. The street was narrow between two rows of dark arcades, where passers-by walked invisible. I myself kept in the light. At a corner I heard outcries. A man like a ragged bandit, in a pointed hat, emerges from a lane, dragging a child, who resists and cries for succour. "*Soccorso! soccorso!*" He is tragic, the little boy. He stretches out his arms and his head toward the dark gallery, where he detects moving shadows. His eyes shine, grown big with fear. "*Soccorso! soccorso!*" The man drags him on. After five or six rods, the struggle continuing, half a dozen people have made their appearance in the road. One of them, in a cloak reaching to his heels, grasps the child by his free arm, and coolly, though his lips twitch with anger, says to the man in rags: "Stop and explain yourself!" The other looks at him with a sly glance, sees that nothing can be done, and begins a sort of argument about the boy. After three or four sentences, the man in the cloak takes possession of the child, then sets him at liberty; and the little fellow, wild with terror, runs away at full speed. The two men again eye each other, then go their separate ways.

In France, we should have begun by rescuing

the child from his oppressor in the name of immortal principles; and almost certainly the two men would then have come to blows without further words.

It is curious, the story of this church of S. Francis, which, its restoration being completed, ranks with the purest examples of the Italian Gothic. I know it well, though the guidebooks do not mention it. One of my Bolognese friends had taken me to visit it with much affection; and another takes me to it again, that I may see the progress of the repairs. Standing before the façade of red brick, the windows still blocked up, the latter relates to me through what a series of adventures the old building has passed. The French of the revolution, about 1796, made it a custom-house. Even after the Empire had fallen, this profanation continued, and it was not until 1840 that Pope Gregory XVI., who ruled Bologna through one of his legates, restored the church to the Conventual Minorite Franciscans. The latter undertook to reopen it, and the false taste of the architects of the time rendered the building unrecognizable. The columns were heavily coated with plaster, frightful chapels broke its outlines, and paintings after the manner of Epinal gave it the effect of a decorated granary. General Cialdini was, perhaps, struck with this resemblance, for in 1866 he siezed the church and made

it a military storehouse. Thus it remained, deplorably repaired, violently desecrated, a thing forgotten, until very recently.

But Bologna has her artists, jealous for the city's honour. Some of the most influential citizens of the town—Conte Nerio Malvezzi, Conte Joseph Grabinski, Signor Alfonzo Rubbiani—set on foot negotiations to rescue and restore the poor edifice. They formed great projects, and—a noticeable thing—they were immediately supported by public sentiment. After much effort, they obtained a gift of the church to the city; and the city in turn at once presented it to the cardinal-archbishop. Then, in 1886, the work of restoration began. The original plans of the building had been found. It was proposed to restore it in all its ancient grace. To this end the chapels were demolished, the columns set free, the coating removed from the walls, the windows reconstructed and new glass put in.

Private citizens of Bologna, the gentlemen I have mentioned, with a few others, undertook the task. Up to the present time more than 100,000 lire [\$20,000] have been spent; and in 1888 Queen Margherita, deeply interested in the work, obtained from government a grant of 20,000 lire. Then the sponsors of S. Francis at once bought and demolished the old buildings of the coach office, which spoiled one side of the apse; and they discovered, repaired, and gave a suitable

place, on the edge of the street, to three wonderful tombs with precious colonnettes, found half destroyed; those of three great Bolognese commentators, Accurse, Odofredo, and Rolandino di Romanzi. I visited the work-yard where stone-cutters were restoring the beautiful capitals from one of these tombs. I still hear my friend's sympathetic tone of voice as he said to one of the workmen in his blouse, standing on a scaffolding: "Will you kindly permit a stranger who is interested in art to see how we are getting on in our work at S. Francis'?"

Everywhere you meet, more or less, this care for ancient things. The Italians well understand their artistic wealth. They value it more than we do ours. In their case there is public sentiment, while all that we have are archæologists and a commission on historic monuments.

This watchful care is of ancient date in Italy. At the time when the Council of Ten governed Venice there was a decree issued in respect to the art of glass-making. Therein was the following little article: "If a workman transports his art into a foreign country, to the detriment of the republic, he shall be enjoined to return. If he does not obey, those nearest him shall be thrown into prison. If he still persists in remaining in a foreign land, an emissary shall be sent to kill him."

The section ends, however, with these words of

mercy: "After the workman's death, his relatives shall be set at liberty."

#### FLORENCE.

How captivated one is in Florence by this vision of yellow houses, this idle carelessness of landscape, people, attitudes, voices, this abundance of flowers, all these tranquillizing, exquisite things, signs of a country already southern! Here are the same little flower-women as of old, at the street corners, with their baskets full of pinks, heliotrope, roses, and a pretty variety of nasturtiums with black centres. In this delaying season, while the mountains which enfold the city are all white with snow, a truss of sorrel going past is a delight to the eye. But the Florence of the suburbs is especially beautiful in colour. Few people go there, for there are no public buildings to be visited. It has its poetry, however. The streets are broad, dusty, bordered with low houses, very white or yellow. A new growth of trees rises here and there above the walls of the close-shut gardens.

From time to time there are the fruit shops that are so attractive to the eye: a deep, narrow room, always open, a doorway framed with a wreath of golden colocynth, clusters of bananas hanging from the rafters; baskets full of tomatoes, nuts, grapes, oranges, lemons, which mingle their perfume with an odour of rancid oil; in the midst a



woman seated, her shoulders covered with a pink shawl, her eyes shining in the half-darkness; quite in the back of the shop the spark of light from a lamp burning before the Madonna. In the morning you will see stopping before the door long carts shaped like boats, painted red.

My French friend, the officer, who knows Africa well, returns from an expedition in the suburban quarters.

He is in Italy for the first time. "Oh!" he says, "we only want an occasional burnouse in these streets to feel as if we were in the East. Now I see why they took it so hard that we should have Tunis. The East begins here."

This expression is, perhaps, too strong. But the remark has truth in it. It explains that something of the charm, something in the manners, something in the people, of this country, which is not altogether Latin.

I was not here in time for the first performance of the *Rantzau*. But I attend the second. The great auditorium of the Pergola is completely filled. The success of Mascagni is quite a national affair. From all the provinces of Italy people have come to applaud. This is evident as you glance over the house. The most varied types are here. There is, first, the one most common of all among the men, the heavy Piedmontese face, with short, thick nose, the moustache strong, curving, drooping at the corners of the mouth. Energy, even

harshness, appear to be its dominant note. At the same time this stout man talking with his neighbour—who may be a merchant, a manufacturer, a deputy, an *impresario*, there is no telling—has a shrewd smile; and when he lifts his heavy hand, the gesture, oddly enough, is refined and very expressive. Then you ask yourself whether this coarse body may not perhaps conceal a soul that is very keen at times.

Near by are Florentines, thoroughbreds, unmistakably, artist heads, men of wealth and luxurious habits, extremely impressionable, with that elegance and that reserve which characterize so many Italian faces. ✓

Also I remark men from Southern Italy, very black-haired, pale, more excitable in look. Some have faces very short, the beard growing forward and very curly; crafty, passionate, defiant. Framed, they would resemble the portraits of the old *condottieri* that we see in galleries. ✓

Almost no one, notwithstanding the festal character of the occasion, has the silk hat. My neighbour assures me that the derby is preferred on æsthetic grounds, the Italians being of opinion that the black campanile with which we cover our heads destroys the harmony of outline.

Among the women the Juno type, or that of the Minerva, is most frequent; many beautiful dark eyes, and regular, imposing features. The blonde Dianas are more rare—I mean among

women in society; in the lanes of Venice and Naples there are plenty of them.

And now the curtain rises. Mascagni has no cause to complain of public coldness. I count the recalls. The young composer is called out seven times in the first act, six in the second, fourteen in the third, and eight in the fourth. Each time that the applause breaks out, the actors—of whom two are very good—stop. One of them goes toward the side scene, and returns with Mascagni, who, smiling and serious, salutes, indicates with his free hand the actors, as if to say that the honour of the success is entirely theirs, and backs off the stage a little awkwardly. He has a broad, genial, intelligent face, this young *maestro*, beardless, the mouth large and well cut, the forehead high, under bushy hair. One recognizes a nature simple and free, intoxicated with a fame so precocious—premature, say some, although there can be no doubt about his talent. I strive to determine how much, in the almost constant ovation that he receives, is sincere admiration, and how much is a foregone conclusion due to the flattering of national vanity. I do, indeed, believe that many of my neighbours whose applause is the noisiest are doing all this in cold blood. But they are people of another race, admirable actors even when they have no need to be, and I do not know.

One of them, in an *entr'acte*, a great friend of Mascagni, relates to me the composer's history.

It begins, as biographies of artists often do, in the extreme of poverty. Mascagni is a Tuscan. He was born at Leghorn, a purely commercial city, whose streets and harbour I saw one foggy day, of which I remember nothing. In 1884, after three years' study in the Conservatory at Milan, poor in money, and endowed, it seems, with a formidable appetite, he engaged himself as subdirector with an *opérette* troupe, at a salary of five lire a day. Two years he lived this vagabond life, going from one little theatre to another, constantly changing *impresarios*. He became completely disgusted. Like most Italians (who, as a rule, marry very young) he had taken a wife. He had met, loved, and married a young singer, poor like himself. And near the close of 1885, they established themselves at Cevignola, a little city of Apulia, near Foggia. Here Mascagni made friends. He gave lessons on the piano, and began a grand opera, *William Radcliff*, which is not yet finished. Then, one day, a great event happened at Cevignola. The municipal council had a meeting; then, the mayor went to see Mascagni. "Can you play all instruments?" the mayor inquired.

"I can," rejoined Mascagni.

"From the clarionet to the harp?"

"Certainly I can."

"In that case we appoint you director of the municipal orchestra, with a salary of a hundred lire [twenty dollars] a month."

Fortune was beginning to make advances to Mascagni; but the post of *direttore della scuola orchestrale* would not have sufficed to give the poor musician fame, or even the humblest competency. After a time Signor Edoardo Sonzogno, the rich Milanese publisher, proprietor of the *Secolo*, and a sort of Mæcenas for Italian artists, offered a prize for a one-act opera. Mascagni resolved to try; and composed, upon a libretto by his friend Taglioni, from a novel by Verga, the score of the *Cavalleria rusticana*. He was one of the three successful competitors, and the only one whose work, represented at Rome in 1890, was enthusiastically received.

The rest of the story—I mean to say the journey of the *Cavalleria* over Europe—is too well known to need mention. What is not, however, matter of general notoriety is the fact that the Sicilian author, from whom the libretto had been borrowed, seeing the unexpected success of Mascagni's opera, instituted a suit, which has just been decided, and the rights of the poet have been valued at an enormous sum. "Never mind," says my neighbour, "it is Signor Sonzogno who has to pay." I ask him, "But why abandon a vein so happily opened? Why subjects like *William Radcliff* and the *Rantzau*? Do you not think an Italian would do better, even in music, to draw inspiration from the poetry, so abundant, of his native land?" ✓

He was about to answer. We were at the moment in the foyer, or, rather, under the portico of La Pergola, in a crowd of people. There was noisy talking all about us; an aspect of joy, of true emotion, pervaded all these Italian faces; the pleasure so rare, so coveted, not yet exhausted, of welcoming a national work, a new talent; perhaps a successor to Verdi, now passing off the stage? A sudden stir in the crowd made us look round. Mascagni himself, bare-headed, his arms linked with those of two friends, young like himself, came running down the staircase, brilliant with light. The three were all laughing and leaping down the stairs like boys. And he seemed so happy, he rejoiced in his young fame with such simplicity, he was so thoroughly the poet carried away by the rapture of his first success, that I did as everyone else was doing—applauded him with all my heart. ✓

#### SIENA.

Difficult of access is *Siena gentile*. One must love her to go in search of her, so slowly and so far, among hills to which only the accommodation trains give access. But how she rewards you; how she makes you forget the route! Ah, the dear city, who takes your heart forever! I saw her one evening and one morning. In the morning she was interesting and beautiful. I visited with continuous and augmented pleasure her many-

coloured cathedral, her Libreria whose walls are covered with masterpieces, her museum, her streets, her great market place, peculiar of form, designed, says the legend, on the model of the cloak of an unknown pilgrim who once passed through the city. From the top of her campanile she appeared all red, amid the green of her hills, divided into several quarters, of which each one is a labyrinth, as if the city had been made of huge sea shells with regular windings laid down side by side.

But by night Siena was marvellous and beautiful. Anyone who has not seen this city in the moonlight has no idea of the beauty of shadows, and of their suggestive, dreamy power over the mind. For the stones do not say the same by night and day. By night their colour is effaced, the details of ornamentation disappear; outlines alone rise clear in the air, and with them the essential physiognomy of the past. The mediæval world is there in all its life. Figure to yourself one of the dark and winding lanes that surround an old French cathedral; multiply infinitely, on steep slopes of ground, the unexpected turnings of the streets, the buttresses flung out into space, the overhanging chimera-gargoyles, the doorways of dense shadow, the streaks of blue light, the little bridges thrown across from one palace to another, the fret-work of chimneys against the stars, and you will have some idea of the old Ghibelline city. The people seem

to have a consciousness that they inhabit a world of fantasy belonging to the past. They go about noiselessly. Their shops cast no light upon the pavement. No noise, no startling note of modern life, interrupts the dream of ancient times in which one moves.

I was accompanied by a young Italian, captivated like myself by the beauty of the hour and the place. I had met him in the train from Florence to Siena. He was very tall, very slender, hatchet-faced, with soft, expressive eyes; he wore a blue woollen cap ending in a point at the back, and on the right side of it was embroidered, in white letters, *Siena*. A student, undoubtedly. I had for a long time been an auditor of his conversation with an old Sienese, my neighbour. The old man was lamenting the lost splendour of the university.

"In my time," he said, "we were twelve hundred. What professors we had! They were men famous in all the sciences. And they lived among us; they belonged to our city. To-day, for most men, to be sent to Siena would be exile."

And the youth replied with deferential courtesy. He also knew the names of the former professors, the dates of their deaths, or the chairs that they now occupied elsewhere. With fifty years between, it was an echo of that tender affection, that erudite respect which overflowed in the old man's heart.

"How many are you to-day?" I asked.



"About three hundred," was the reply. "A hundred in law, and the rest in medicine."

"And you belong——"

"To the law school," he said, touching his cap. "We have resumed the insignia of the different schools since the centenary fêtes at Bologna. The law, you see, wears the blue cap; medicine is red, mathematics green, literature white and pink."

"Why two colours?"

"It was white first. But when the students entered their class Carducci said to them: 'You look like cooks.' And they added the pink. Do you get off at Siena, signor?" ✓

"Yes."

"Permit me to serve as your guide. You arrive by night. That is the best time to get an impression of our Siena."

And he accompanied me, talking in a low voice, becoming silent when it was especially beautiful, indicating by a gesture some palace outline or turn of street in the moonlight. He told me that he was from Pistoja; that he had come to the University of Siena because prices were so low here,—a room at twenty lire the month, board at sixty,—while Bologna or Padua involved much greater expense; that he had a great love for the old Tuscan city, and for history, and for Dante. "I am very enthusiastic about Dante," he said. "I have studied the question whether Dante ever

came to Siena, as some assert on account of the passage concerning Pietro Vanucci. It has been maintained that he passed through every city of which he speaks. But I argue for the negative in a pamphlet."

"And how came you to interest yourself so much in the poet?"

"When I was very young I read, up there in Pistoja, among our mountains, those passages of the *Divina Commedia* that concern our city; and from that I went on to study the whole poem. I love Dante so much that I have collected at home—a *casa*—more than two hundred volumes about my poet. I have twenty busts and medals which represent him, and I collect engravings of him, too. My thesis for the doctors' degree is to be: 'On the Law in the *Divina Commedia*, and in the *Summa Theologiæ* of St. Thomas.'"

These things he said to me in fragments, as we wandered with noiseless footsteps through the streets with their shadows cut by the bluish moonlight.

When I returned to the Black Eagle, my hostess, seeing me so delighted with *Siena gentile*, said: "What a pity, signor, you should not be here in August! There is such a beautiful *festa*, with all the old costumes of Siena, the heralds, the nobles, the tradesmen, with banners from all the quarters, coming out into the square and in procession through the streets."

“What is it they celebrate?”

She looked up proudly. “The victory, signor, gained over the Florentines in the *Quattro-Cento*.”

Oh, long-enduring popular memory, which we no longer know!

## II.

### ROMAN HOUSES, AND THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA.

ROME is not a city to be visited. One ought to live there, to see her in her hours of supreme beauty, to make love to her as one does to a woman, and have her smile back at you in return, as a woman does. And these are moments rare and unexpected, which guides are powerless to provide; moments whose sweetness captivates the whole soul.

You are coming back at night from some expedition to a distant ruin, very tired of history and of learned explanations and of all the material which is intended to excite your imagination—and often kills it; you are returning, and it is twilight. Mists arise from the vast plain, and are rosy in the sunset. You are walking through a dark street, and you lift your eyes. In front of you the hill is all in full light, crossed with high yellow façades, a group of palaces—each in itself a stately building; all, as a group, a very masterpiece of fancy; and here and there a slender black cypress, or the sheaf of a palm tree. You turn; behind you there are only bluish shadows, roofs of houses, which are

nothing but long blue outlines; the pure curve of many domes against a light sky, the colour of pale gold, like Byzantine haloes. Oh! then, how one feels the spell of this unique city; how easy to understand those painters, or those tired and dreamy souls who come to Rome for three weeks, and never go away!

In truth, on seeing Rome anew, I have felt that I loved her for the first time. But to say why, and of what elements this love is composed, I am not able. There is something about it, as about all loves, that is inexplicable.

I think the welcome the Romans give one may have something to do with it. They have a natural hospitality, at once familiar and reserved, which comes of a long habit of receiving. Among the Roman nobles especially there is a very peculiar sentiment. Italians of the North or South, Germans, French, Spaniards, Russians, Englishmen, are equal in the presence of the graceful, impartial welcoming of the Roman. Let them come. Their language, their nature, the character of their minds will be understood; enough of the contemporary history of their country will be known to make conversation about their homes possible; there will be open to them all, with equal courtesy, drawing rooms which are galleries, and galleries which are museums; and each stranger will feel almost as if he were at home in this world through which all the world passes in its turn. This equal-

handed welcome conceals, perhaps, an underlying pride inherited from the ancient masters of the world; a conviction of superiority which the strifes of younger peoples, their successes, their conquests, the vicissitudes of private destinies, the fate of Rome itself cannot touch and scarcely interests. It is agreeable, however; and though it is anything but homage, it flatters as if it were.

Nothing is so astonishing, moreover, as to meet people whom nothing astonishes. I imagine that we are, in a degree, to the Romans like caravans, not now loaded with a tribute of silver, but bringing news, ideas, a suggestion of the world's progress. You think you are going to tell them something. But they half knew it already, or at least conjectured it. Preceding caravans had prepared them. They had seen, before you, other *buzzuri* of your nation or of some other, who had brought them the information. No city being more visited than their own, they would have an idea of everything, if they never travelled. In fact, however, they do travel, in most cases. They have friends or relatives in all the great capitals; they have the journals and the reviews; and they have the gift of divination, which comes from long experience of men.

I arrive, at about ten o'clock, at the house of the Princess A. Three drawing rooms *en suite*, with no one in them, exquisitely furnished and hung with fine pictures. In the fourth the

princess, seated at her work, in dark dress, blonde, beautiful, with a soft, regular beauty—an Italian of one of those grand, sad types for whom the Italians might have invented their pretty word *morbidezza*. Her husband, reclining on a sofa, is reading a review. He rises, advances toward me, presents me, and resumes the conversation, begun elsewhere, with that ease, that suppleness of mind and movement that is so easy to transmit, so hard to acquire. We talk on many subjects. He has ideas upon each, and—which is less usual—he has read upon each. “You know this German work?” he says to me; or: “You would do well to consult the book an Englishman has written about this—Lord L., a friend of mine; it is very interesting.” He is not ignorant concerning the last play, the last novel, and the last fashion in Paris. Nor is his wife. I have no doubt they understand England, Austria, Germany equally well. She talks but little, but with great good sense and a sort of careless dignity. A droll word brings to her lips a smile, very expressive, instantly vanishing. The lovely blonde head, slightly bent, remains motionless for the most part, and the reflection of the lamp does not change its place on the big carved gold beads of her necklace.

One of the *habitués* of the house comes in, a person from Calabria or elsewhere, a *buzzuro*. In their presence he is hopelessly provincial. He chances to speak of Italy—“this young nation.”

Prince A., languid, without lifting his eyes, withdrawing and replacing the pin of his scarf, says: "Yes, very young, with many centuries upon its shoulders."

This feeling of the glory of ancient Rome is to be remarked in all classes of society. It seems to me to greatly take precedence, at least in the heart of Romans, properly so called, of any pride as to modern Rome. A man employed in an office said to me: "It is the greatness of Rome that has made the malaria sometimes seem important. The latter is exaggerated on account of the former." Just now I saw at a street corner two ragged, bare-footed boys, of whom the elder might be twelve. Each had in his hand a bit of pointed stick like a poniard, and was trying to touch the other. I stopped to watch them, and the duel grew much more lively in consequence. After a few minutes, in which the contest hung undecided, the taller boy cried out: "You shall see that I am a Roman of Rome!"—*Romano di Roma!* And he gave a thrust which tore the other's shirt-sleeve from shoulder to wrist. Near by, seated in a doorway, an old woman, for whom in her youth lads may have fought with steel, looked on, laughing silently.

The earlier population of Rome has been swamped by an invasion of strangers. In 1870 the city had 226,000 inhabitants; it has now, we are told, nearly 400,000; whence it follows that, of four



men one meets in the street, only two, on the average, are Romans. The latter, however, keep their modes of life and many of their customs. In the transformed city they still use the Roman patois; they dwell in the old quarters; they are, like their ancestors, intelligent, disposed to a labour that has many intervals of repose; very much inclined to depend for a livelihood upon the generosity of the great, and to consider as Quiritarian rights the various sinecures of public and private administration; very domestic; apparently a little severe, but only apparently so, in the government of their families; somewhat jealous; and extravagantly fond of little trips into the country, in which almost nothing is spent. The women still wear the bright-coloured corset outside the dress. The men of the seignorial domains, the remote *tenute*, come on certain days to visit their friends in the suburbs and obtain supplies. Butchers, to stretch apart the carcasses of veal and mutton, use green reeds, often with the leaves still on them. No one cares very much about the morrow. Everything is done with diplomatic slowness, *col tempo*. If, late in the afternoon, you cross the Piazza Colonna, you will find it full of men who are there by force of immemorial tradition, talking in groups of the affairs of the city or of their own. The most important rural enterprises, and the smallest also, are discussed there, under the walls of the Palazzo Chigi. Sometimes a big, sunburned fellow, put-

ting his hand in his pocket, half withdraws it full of corn, which he quickly drops back again, that the public may not see too plainly what is going on. A sale of seed has been made. And you can observe any day, at the same hour and place, that the old Roman habit of walking in the Corso, that insignificant, narrow street, remains triumphant, notwithstanding the via Nazionale and the new quarters.

No, the transformation of Rome is not the act of the Romans. Never would they have devised that *Piano regolatore*, daring even to brutality, which takes little account of churches and historic spots. Never would they have reconstructed the Ponte San Angelo. If they had begun its demolition, and had come upon those mediæval arches which Bernini covered in and crowned with statues, they would have stopped short. And had they suspected, under the mediæval work, a third bridge of the Roman epoch, they would merely have uncovered a fragment, to have one ruin the more. At heart they were, and still are, in favour of respectful streets, that go round the old structure, whatever it is, bowing before it in their fashion. But they will not protest, and they will use the new bridge. Among the habits they retain from their ancient lineage is that of being present at revolutions, not as indifferent persons, but as connoisseurs.

I have seen at his house the commendatore

G. M. He was in his study, but received me in a little room adjacent, a kind of *salotto*. Why let the visitor see that one is preparing a report, that one has bundles of papers, letters, open books, on one's table? Accordingly, to receive me, he came out from the sanctuary of his private affairs.

"My dear commendatore," I said to him, "will you tell me about this failure in building here in Rome?"

He went to a narrow window looking out upon a wide landscape, the prati di Castello, the Vatican, and Monte Mario, and at the right the beginning of the plain of the Tiber.

"From this distance," he said, "the quarter you are looking at seems to be built over and inhabited. It does not specially differ in appearance from parts of the city nearer to us. But really it is half ruinous and half deserted. On the opposite side of the city, also, near the railway, on the Viminal and the Pincio, there are similar ruins. They cause us great shame, and we Romans shall never encourage the plan of a world's fair in Rome until they have disappeared. Should we call the whole world to look at these new ruins?"

"We were too hasty and too extravagant in our plans. This was the first mistake, and it involved many others. Ancient Rome cannot be handled like a modern city. Its ground undermined, pierced, its structures all of different dates, the many ancient buildings still in part standing, the

great irregularities of the surface, the habits of an ancient people, not to be modified in a day, were all obstacles which should have been taken into account. Slowly Rome might have been transformed. The idea is no sacrilege, nor is it new. The French had it in the beginning of the century. Near the close of the pontifical rule Monsignor di Merode had begun upon it. He represented the element of progress, as Cardinal Antonelli was tradition incarnate. Merode is the man who stands at the beginning of the great Roman works. To him we owe the construction of the railway station, of the barracks of Macao, and especially of the via Nazionale, which would have been much finer had its original plan been followed. The street was intended to pass the Quirinal. Thence it was to cross by a viaduct over Trajan's Forum, and with a broad sweep come out into the Piazza di Venezia, at the end of the Corso. This was an excellent scheme, if it had been carried out.

"But Monsignor di Merode had other plans still more extensive. He had worked at them with Lamoricière. He was still occupied with them after the Italians became masters of Rome, and discussed them with Baron Haussmann, who took shelter here during the Franco-Prussian war. Haussmann was much interested. We are told that one day, summing up his advice, he said, designating the extreme regions around the rail-

way station, not at that time built over: 'You see, monsignor, your Vatican, your museums, your galleries, are all fine, but they are cold. I would get your statues out into the open air, and lay out for them here a sacred Bois de Boulogne.'

"This was not only a *jeu d'esprit*, but it was wise. Many Romans think, as I do, that it would have been politic not to have sought abruptly to displace the centre of Rome, but to have stopped, with some Bois de Boulogne, sacred or secular, the growth of the city toward these remote regions, which are too extensive, too difficult to cover; and to have concentrated all the effort toward the Prati di Castello, thus making a new and compact quarter between the Tiber and the Vatican.

"But the time for this has gone by. The via Nazionale, instead of passing the Quirinal, only make the access to it easier, and then turned abruptly, with repeated zigzags and a heavy grade, to strike the Corso at a right angle. Many immense works were projected and undertaken all at once. After the first years of the Italian occupation, when the conquest had been consummated by the residence of the court at Rome, when the population was seen to increase with such rapidity, then came a fever of enterprise: There was the plan of walling in the Tiber, which has cost more than 150,000,000 [\$30,000,000]; there was a determination that new Rome should surpass the old and

absorb it; that it should be a great modern city and a stronghold; and at this time came the famous *Piano regolatore*, which would render Rome unrecognizable, and has already made it, at the cost of sacrifices that I will not enumerate, very different from what it was.

"The first fault, a fault of plan, was, then, to propose improvising a capital. Unintentionally, no doubt, but certainly, speculation was encouraged, and the general excitement fanned to fever heat. The Italians had the idea that Rome would never cease growing. The Eternal City became an open market for enterprise; and the first new houses having been very profitable to their builders, everybody was eager to build, not merely capitalists, but 'promoters,' men who had nothing but the coat they wore and a facility for borrowing money. This went so far that we have seen one of these 'men of the moment,' a tenth-rate speculator, failing splendidly for 40,000,000!

"Ah! the happy days of madness! From 1883 to 1887 it was all fairyland. The unimproved land of the new quarters, the gardens with vines and fruit trees growing together, the precious *vigne* so dear to the Romans, were bought at large prices. Princes cut up their parks and villas, speculative banks grew like mushrooms under the shadow of the great national banks. It was enough to be acquainted with one of the higher employees to be accepted as a customer. The can-

didate for ownership in land, penniless, bought his lot, an *area fabbricabile*. He borrowed money to make his payment, and signed a note for three months, renewable, which was discounted in Italy, and, as a rule, was marketable in France. The bank took a mortgage on the land. The foundations of the building were laid. The bank furnished a new loan to build the first story, and, the story being built, took another mortgage; and so on up to the roof. You may well suppose that walls went up on all sides!

"So many walls went up that the number of houses threatened to exceed the number of tenants. A certain uneasiness began to be manifested. This increased by reason of rivalries, actual or feigned, between the National Bank and the Banca Romana. A rumour became current that their relations with each other were not strictly fraternal. But we should have gotten out of it with prorogations and a modest disaster, such as all nations allow themselves now and then, but for the aggressive policy of Signor Crispi, which ruined everything. France grew uneasy. The French banks hesitated, then became positively unfriendly; and notes to the value of six or seven millions, no longer finding credit, fell back upon Rome.

"This was the end. The banks that had been established for the occasion, seeing the springs go dry, refused to lend. The contractors refused,

very naturally, to reimburse. The masons came down off the scaffolding, their trowels still full of mortar. The painters stopped in the midst of a fillet. The failures of private individuals and of corporations went off like a series of connected mines. A panic set in. It was in vain that Signor Crispi, to avert the crisis, obliged the National Bank to lend to the threatened institutions the sum of 50,000,000 [\$10,000,000]. The crash could not be postponed. The loan societies went into liquidation. In return for the money they had scattered abroad they recovered only houses, most of them still unfinished, and the others not easy to let because a whole army of employees, contractors, and workmen had left the city. But the societies, in turn, were largely debtors to the National Bank. They made over their assets to their principal creditor, which in this way became and remains the owner of a very large part of the new quarters. This is the entire story."

"It is simple, so far as ordinary speculators are concerned. But how was it that great personages, who had immense fortunes, were also ruined?"

"You refer to the Roman princes. We do not need to mention names—everyone knows who they are. Indeed, it was a most extraordinary thing, and the more so because the Roman patriciate, and especially the *Neri*, lavish no money in receptions, live simply, and, if they have no debts of ancient date inherited with the property, are



examples of those well-preserved fortunes, in no way impaired, which appear to be secure from any imprudence. Unfortunately, here the imprudence was enormous, inconceivable. The person of whom we both are thinking had a fortune especially in land. If he had been contented with selling this land, he would have grown richer. But he chose to play the part of a loan society himself. He borrowed to lend to contractors, and without even taking mortgages. Not being paid, he renewed his notes, and allowed interest to accumulate. After a few years, the few millions that he had borrowed at first became 30,000,000 [\$6,000,000], and the general disaster surprised him with this enormous debt, his debtors insolvent, without guarantee, and with mortgaged lands depreciated by the crisis."

"And how was it about the Pope? Is it true that the Holy See invested funds and lost them in this affair?"

"Yes, and no. The thing has been exaggerated, and especially it has been misunderstood. I believe I know it thoroughly. You must understand that a Roman prelate, Monsignor Folchi, administered the finances of the Holy See with a committee of three cardinals, the latter having only an advisory power. By degrees he abstained from conferring with this committee; and, knowing the activity of Leo XIII., and the pleasure which he took in doing everything him-

self as far as possible, Monsignor Folchi limited himself to taking the advice of the Pope, when he felt the need of consulting with anyone. Now, at the time when Rome gave itself up to the speculations we have been speaking of, and sought loans from every quarter, it was represented by different persons to the Holy Father that, instead of placing his savings in England, he would do better and be more patriotic, he would render a great service to the Romans, in buying shares in some of these loan associations. Their stock was at this time perfectly good. Leo XIII. followed this advice. Later, also, when the nobles, engaged in buying land and building, asked him for loans, the Pope—following the old and very natural tradition of the Roman pontiffs, to aid the princely houses—granted them, first taking mortgages, but after a time relaxing these necessary precautions. Monsignor Folchi—and this is the serious error that is laid to his charge—consented to accept as security the stock of these very companies which, a few months later, became either partly or wholly worthless.

“These acts of generosity coupled with imprudence caused very serious embarrassment to the Holy See. It was said that the loss amounted to 20,000,000 [\$4,000,000]. This might have been so, had it been necessary to realize at once upon the assets of the debtors. But a slow liquidation will give results much less disastrous. However, you

will not be surprised to learn that the committee of cardinals has been re-established, and has now deliberative authority."

The commendatore had maintained the conversation in an easy tone, with a sort of dilettantism, betraying a certain pleasure, as I thought, in talking over former times and the persons who had played a part in them. When he had reached this point a different expression came into his face; a little spark shone in his eyes, as he looked at me, and he said:

"Now go and see for yourself. But do not be unjust. Remember that, in the beginning, at least, of this unfinished enterprise, there was an enthusiasm, a desire to embellish, an illusion, possibly, as to the future greatness of Rome, which may serve as excuse for more faults than one; and that, besides, we Romans have not a monopoly of these disasters."

Accordingly I went to see; and I confess that I had been very much prejudiced against the new quarters by many of my friends who had already visited there. My first expedition took me, with many intentional aberrations, from the Pincio to the Railway Station, thence to Santa Maria Maggiore, to S. John Lateran, and beyond the walls. The following are, briefly, my impressions:

This side of the Porta Pinciana, a great many houses have been built on the grounds of the old Villa Ludovici, whose Casino, adorned with

Guercino's fresco, has been preserved. Prince Buoncompagni has built himself a new palace here, surrounded with gardens, much less in extent than the others, but still very beautiful. Everywhere in this neighbourhood the broad, regular streets lack those graceful visions of palms and oaks which delight the eye as one ascends the old Roman hills. These streets are bordered with large buildings, generally apartment houses, square, of a new whiteness, or, more frequently, painted in pale yellow. Via Sardegna, via Ludovici, via Buoncompagni—the style is the same. It seems as if the same architect, haunted by models of the Renaissance, had designed them all. And the aspect is that of a city of yesterday, without monuments,—for the seven hundred feet of façade of the Ministry of Finance does not constitute a monument,—which might be anywhere in Europe, or in America, or upon the grounds of a Universal Exposition, no matter where. Certain persons declare themselves disgusted at this. They have a power of indignation which I do not possess. All these buildings may be more or less suitably planned. How does this concern us? We do not live in them. They are out of keeping with the old quarters. Were not those old quarters once new themselves, and themselves out of keeping with earlier buildings? It seems to me that unless one has perpetually present the idea of Trajan's Column or

the Pantheon (which is not Agrippa's!) one may see without displeasure these streets full of air and light, if not full of the past. If the architecture lacks a little originality, the sloping ground breaks up monotony. This brings a glimpse of the sky between one cornice and the next, throws out the angles, and piles the house-tops one above another; the good taste of the outlines and of the proportions is everywhere noticeable, and the glowing whiteness of the façades has a charming effect against the blue sky. Moreover, very few of the houses are closed here; and there are many open shops. We are in a good part of the new quarters.

From the *via Venti-Settembre*, opposite the Ministry of Finance, I catch a first distant glimpse of an unfinished building lamentable to see, desolate-looking, with rough walls blackened at the summit. In the *via Principe Umberto*, which is a very long street parallel to the railway, there are many houses without window-frames, or with the sashes, and all the glass broken out; two or three are barricaded within; across each bay are planks crossed and nailed. I make inquiry. "You may suppose, signor, that so many unoccupied apartments tempt people who have none at all. Some poor fellow opens a door, inspects the house, finds it to his taste. He brings his family. They set up housekeeping. Nobody is on the watch. The neighbours are indulgent.

Presently a government official happens to pass. 'Oho! a floor is let! We must have the taxes paid!' A tax bill is sent promptly to the owner, which in two cases out of four means to the National Bank. There is much surprise at these unknown tenants; the matter is investigated; the carabinieri do their duty; after which the windows and doors are all nailed up. This is the explanation of the boards at door and window."

As we go on in the direction of S. John Lateran, the blocks of houses are large and imposing as ever, but the population is poorer and more crowded; and evident signs reveal hasty and cheap building. On the Piazza Vittorio-Emanuele, a row of enormous columns in imitation of marble, making a portico and supporting five or six stories, show the simple brickwork of which they are made. Here and there the stucco has fallen off; bands of iron surround the top of the columns; it is decoration in ruins. And the same spectacle is on all sides. The same Renaissance palace, more simple but not less vast, now occupied, now vacant, pursues us to the very extremity of the city, to the Basilica *omnium urbis et orbis ecclesiarum mater et caput*. There stands the same palace, isolated in the midst of unsold or empty ground. A crowd of tenants people the rooms. Rags are hung out to dry from all the windows, and these garlands of poverty flutter in the breeze.

Happily, from the steps of S. John, there is also

in sight the Roman Campagna. It was, especially one morning when I strayed thither, of a harmony of light that no words can render. There were no trees, no objects to mark the foreground or the middle distance; there were only the beautiful outlines of the plain itself, rising in low hillocks, of a green which became light yellow as it was more remote, and finally melted into the azure tints of the mountains on the horizon, which were crowned with a fringe of dazzling snow. Above, a sky everywhere very pure, silvery at first behind the snows, then of a faint blue which seemed to glitter with white specks, and very different from that strong colour that the popular imagination lends to the Italian sky.

I remained so long on the platform above the steps of S. John's, that I caught a malady from which I have not yet recovered. It was not a Roman fever; it was a love of the Roman Campagna, which strangers too rarely visit. It came to me only by degrees. First it led me to visit the suburbs just outside the gates, and gave me opportunity to complete the investigation I had been making within. For, if you wish to understand the full extent of the city's disaster, there is something more to be seen than the quarter I have described and the prati di Castello, abounding in even larger buildings and more lamentable wrecks. Go out by the Porta Salaria and follow the road for a few hundred feet. Then you

may judge what was this madness of speculation: in every direction abandoned tenement-houses, some just above the ground, others built up one story, or two, or three. Staircases go up in the air in half-demolished turrets; the rain falls directly in upon ceilings, crumbles the plaster, runs in yellow and black streaks down the walls. The streets of this dead city have only names and grass. There is not a trace of a roadway. Sometimes a ground floor is occupied by a poor family; the rest of the house decays slowly, and it is not even worth while to keep a notice on it, "To be let," for there is no possibility of any tenant appearing.

I enter a porch at least fifteen feet high, in front of which three boys are playing at *morra*. This is a blacksmith's shop. Some neighbour, embarrassed by his cart, has lodged it in the back of this shop, the shafts in air. Proceeding further, I find a charming little dwelling house (which, for a rarity, is let), built on the edge of the immense *Agro*, and observe the following details, showing the prodigious force of illusion at certain moments: the passageway into the house is painted in fresco, the walls are covered with landscapes and chubby cupids, a lion of carved stone on a base at the foot of the stairs looks at the poor little housekeeper of one of the tenants who has entered just before me and goes up, a bundle of linen under her arm. This house is let to tenants of the very poorest class.



Will all this ever recover itself? Will the branch of green laurel ever adorn the summit of completed buildings here? Perhaps, with time, in certain other quarters; but never here. To occupy all the empty buildings in Rome would demand nothing less than the army of fifty thousand labourers, contractors, mechanics, and speculators whom the crash put to flight, and whom nothing has as yet recalled.

But it is not ruins only, ancient or modern, that one meets in going about in the neighbourhood of Rome. In my earliest walks, without getting far away from the city, I found two other things worthy of attention: the new fortifications, and the carts which bring in wine from the vineyards of the Castelli Romani.

The carters are a noblesse, for their arms were designed by Raffaello, I mean their cart and their *soffietto*.

The cart is long and narrow, well-shaped. This is bought, ready-made. But the *soffietto* must be found. Every self-respecting carter must go into the woods, often into the thickets of San Spirito, which seem to be in a sense common property,—being the desert itself, and a perfect specimen of neglect,—and there search high and low, until he finds a tree of hard wood, having five or six branches starting from the same point, a tree shaped like a hand. When this excellent piece of timber is discovered, the carter cuts it down; the

next thing is to hew the lower end into a point; after which he sticks it firmly into the left side of his cart, in front of the wheel.

Then, there must be the aid of a specialist, who stretches over the five extended fingers a hood of white material on movable hoops, adorned with festoons of wool, blue, red, green, yellow, according to taste, and multicoloured tufts and fringes. Thus the driver is sheltered, both from noonday sun and from the heavy dews of morning. But the equipage is not yet complete; oh, no! there are yet two things of great importance. What would the Roman carter be, I ask you, without his twenty-four little bells, selected one by one, combined to give fine fourths and thirds, and hung in a semicircle around the *soffietto*? How could he sleep, or how traverse the road, without music? Would the Roman people recognize their friend and servant, him whom the centuries have accustomed to identify his occupation with the sound of bells? Twenty-four bells, then, there must be; not one less. And the last thing is to hang, under the bar of the axle-trees, a small, empty cask, the *bigoncio*, whose swaying back and forth will be in harmony with the music overhead. The cask is needed in case one of the barrels, lying in a line along the cart, should leak on the way. But generally it hangs, useless, knocking from side to side with a dull sound, adding its share to the bass. Nor is the cask chosen by accident; these artis-

tic carters know well the trouble it is to get a cask *ben accordato*!

Pure poetry, you see. Could there be a city official who would persecute it? Such, alas! there has been. The carters have an enemy, or, rather, their chime of bells has one. His name might perhaps be found, if careful search were made, on the lists of the Senate. This man, hostile to old customs, was, some years ago, a police deputy. Did he live in a street traversed by the wine-carriers? He absolutely prohibited the *campanelle*, under pretext that they made a noise! You may imagine the excitement in the corporation. It was equal to breaking it up. The carriers held a meeting. They brought all their resources to bear. Some men of high position and courage undertook the defence of the *soffietto*, and brought the matter before the municipal council of Rome. First, the cruel deputy would hear nothing. Then, accepting good advice, he granted eighteen little bells.

This was very little. It was, in fact, too little. Accordingly the carters, diplomatic after their fashion, in the Roman way, which is made up of patience and a feeling of the fragility of things, added, from time to time, one illegal bell to their chimes. Some have nineteen; some have twenty. Do not speak of it, I beg you, to your Italian friends, but I think that, in one case, I counted twenty-four!

The fortifications inspire interest of another kind, and most respectful. I have always kept at a distance from them, having no permission, and seeking none, to make any close inspection. I therefore know only what any person may see and hear.

Now, it is enough to go outside the streets of the city to become aware that Rome, at this day, is an intrenched camp. The plan was determined on in the very first years of the Italian occupation, but the works were only begun in 1877.

The fortifications are of two kinds—on the west, a wall; and, entirely surrounding the city, a circle of forts and batteries, distant from two and a half to four miles from the Piazza Colonna. The mere inspection of a map explains this scheme of defence. Rome is, in fact, more exposed on the west, the side toward the sea. Not only because a landing of troops might be made, but on account of the nature of the ground—uneven, wooded, impossible to be commanded by batteries. The six forts on the right of the Tiber (Trionfale, Casal Braschi, Boccea, Aurelia antica, Bravetta, Portuense) are, therefore, to be supported in the rear by a fortification, as yet incomplete, which begins on the north, near Monte Mario, surrounds, at a little distance out, the Vatican and the Trastevere, and comes out at the river just below the city. Some idea of the work can be obtained by walking over Monte Mario. I have greatly ad-

mired the depth of the moat and the beautiful travertine of its two sides.

On the left bank, the open and more even ground gives every opportunity for a cross-fire of artillery. The Italian engineers, employing for the most part convict labor, have built here eight forts about a mile apart; three supplementary batteries, on the via Nomentana, on the northeast; and two on the southeast, commanding the via Appia and the via Tuscolana. All this, it appears, is in the latest military style—casemates everywhere, large enough to shelter at each point two battalions, telegraph, telephone, wells, store-houses of provisions. When the communications are entirely completed—which, doubtless, will soon be the case—Rome will have a complete and formidable system of fortifications.

These walks in the new quarters, then in the suburbs, then further out, in the wake of the Roman carters, have led me to love the Campagna di Roma more and more, to study the question of the *Agro*, and to become enthusiastic about it.

For a question of the *Agro* there is, at once one of the most ancient and one of the most urgently modern questions which can concern a Roman, and interest a foreigner.

I ought at first to say what the *Agro romano* is. I did not really know, myself, and perhaps some other people are as ignorant on this point of geography as I was. In the narrowest and most exact

definition of the word it is that wide, high plateau, averaging from a hundred to a hundred and thirty feet above the level of the sea, which surrounds the city, describing a sort of triangle. The longest side, about fifty-six miles, extends along the Mediterranean, from Santa Severa on the north, to Astura, near Anzio. The second side of the triangle extends from Santa Severa to the foot of the Apennines and the river Anio. The third goes to the sea again, leaving the Alban Hills at the left. Thus outlined, this territory nearly corresponds to that of the Roman commune, the largest in all Italy, containing 842 square miles. In the midst of this immense and almost uninhabited territory, without the smallest rival city near her, lies Rome—"Alone like a lion," say the Italians.<sup>1</sup>

Nothing is more rash than to venture statistics as to the *Agro*. Men and animals are migratory here. However, the agricultural societies assert that the *Agro* supports about 6000 oxen and bulls, 18,000 cows, 7000 horses and mares, 12,000 goats, and 320,000 sheep. The cattle remain all the year round on the Campagna, but in the spring the sheep go up to the high mountain pasturages, returning in the autumn. They constitute the principal wealth of the domains, and form flocks generally of several thousand head. Their fresh

<sup>1</sup> See *Monografia della città di Roma e della Campagna romana*, published by the Department of Agriculture, Vol. I. A study of the topographical and physical conditions of Rome and the Campagna.

cheese, the *vicotta*, is a Roman dainty; their hard cheese, *formaggio pecorino*, recalls the absent home to sailors of both services.

The *personnel* in charge of the flocks and herds is not large. But it is extremely interesting, from its manners and customs, and from its traditional hierarchy. You have perhaps met in the remoter quarters of the city, or even at a very early hour, in the Corso, a sturdy horseman, sunburned, wearing a big, soft hat, his shoulders covered with a black cloak lined with green, very ample falling to his ankle, carrying in his hand an iron-shod wooden lance. This is the *buttero* of the Campagna, the guardian of horses or cows, the wanderer who passes his life in pursuit of stray animals, superintends their changes of pasture and the use made of their milk. He is as good a rider as Buffalo Bill's cowboys, with whom he contended at Rome in a memorable tourney, when the colonel himself, admiring his rivals, pronounced their eulogy in words like these: "Not quite so agile, equally solid, the same courage, a thorough knowledge of their business, with intervals of terrible sprees; your Roman *butteri* are cowboys." All these men have horses in plenty at their disposal. They have their titles, probably of more ancient date than those of count or baron. The chief herdsman is the *massaro*; the chief shepherd, the *vergaro*. They have under their orders about the same number of men on all the great domains.

Thus, for the service of a *masseria* of four thousand sheep, from twenty-six to thirty men are required. The *minarente*, in charge of the buffaloes, and his subordinate, the *vece*, have each twenty herdsmen.

The buffaloes of the Campagna! It has long been one of my dreams to see these animals close by, not from the railway, or as they pass, yoked and dull, in a Roman street, dragging a load too heavy for oxen, but to see them at liberty in the pastures of the *Agro*. This dream I have at last realized, and later I will explain how. The matter constantly grows more difficult. They have much decreased in number on the Roman Campagna. Twenty years ago there were five or six thousand, and it is said that now there are not more than two thousand. And yet these strange animals render service that cannot be obtained from their kindred races. I speak not only of the white buffalo cheese, *uova di bufale*, which is greatly valued, nor of their hauling of stone—it was with buffalo teams that the colossal foundation-stones of the Victor Emanuel monument were brought to Rome—but they have another specialty, which makes them very useful in a region of marshy ground. They go down into the muddy swamps of the Pontine Marshes and browse the water-plants that the slow current suffers to become abundant; then, when all the herd are collected in the narrow ditches, the keepers, on horse-



back, riding along above, prick the rear animals, scare the others, and so they all are driven, frightened and galloping, down to the sea, destroying, as they go, whatever remains of the parasitic plants.

It is not the case, as has often been supposed, that the Roman Campagna is entirely given up to pasture land. Everywhere it is more or less cultivated. In each one of these *tenute* (holdings), many of which contain from twelve hundred to five thousand acres,<sup>1</sup> a small section, recognized as suitable for agriculture, is sown with corn or oats. The ground is not enriched. Besides the thickets, the marshes, and the permanent pasturages, there are pasture lands subjected to the *rotazione agraria*. In some cases these are ploughed up every four years; they give their harvest and then lie fallow: in others their productive capacity is used to the very utmost; they are sown twice, three times, four times, then left to rest for an equal period. Which-ever way, nature gets her rights. The grass grows again, and with it the poetry of the fields in the spring. Nowhere so abundantly as here will you find the asphodel, narcissus, centaurea, thistles of many kinds, and, in the low ground, orchids, the ranunculus, flowering rushes, and the yellow iris.

<sup>1</sup> According to the extremely interesting and learned study recently published by Signor Valenti in the *Giornale degli Economisti* of February and March, 1893, the Campagna contains 388 farms, belonging to 200 owners only; 312 *tenute* are of less than 250 acres; the largest territory in one ownership is 18,300 acres.

Besides shepherds, then, there must be farm labourers and harvesters. The *Agro* has them not, having no villages. They are summoned, when needed, and come in bands from the Sabine Mountains, from the Abruzzi, from Romagna, under the charge of a leader, the *caporale*, who has engaged them, and on his part negotiates with the steward of the seignorial domain. They come to plough and break up the ground and to sow it, and are paid a lira, or one and a half (twenty cents or thirty) a day, finding their own food; they are very badly lodged, and, after a month, they go. Another band of these vagabond labourers arrives for the harvest, in June. But this is summer, the dangerous season. Then must be reaped and stored the harvest of many hundreds of acres, as rapidly as possible, not to remain too long in contact with the overheated soil. The men work in squads of three reapers and a binder. They work eleven days, and not one day over. If the harvest is not all in, a new set finishes it. They receive twenty-five lire (five dollars) for the four, and for the whole eleven days; besides this, about two pounds of bread, daily, a pint and three-quarters (a *litre*) of wine, cheese, and some very poor kinds of meat. After the eleventh day every man is gone, and unless it happens that other squads, required to finish the harvest, prolong for a week or two the intense life of this part of the *Agro*, the *tenuta* remains almost deserted. The sheep and

their shepherds have gone up to the high pasturages of the Sabina. There remain only the herdsmen, very few in number, all men of great physical endurance, and doubtless more or less acclimated. And the Campagna—burned, torrid, buzzing with the flight of the countless insects that tease the cattle—remains empty and desolate until the end of August, protected against the return of men by its formidable and ancient mistress and queen, the fever. ✓

Volumes have been written in Italy upon this question of malaria. It is the object of incessant study on the part of medical celebrities and of discussions perpetually renewed. It offers a thousand points of controversy. It comes up, not only as to the Roman Campagna, but also as to a great number of Italian localities, some of which are famous. According to a health map of Italy, published by the central bureau of the Senate, 6 provinces only, out of 69, are completely exempt from this evil; or, to give figures more definite and exact, 2677 towns out of 8257.<sup>1</sup>

So far as the city of Rome is concerned, the insalubriousness of the air, in the time of extreme heat, has certainly been exaggerated. Even in the months of July, August, and September, cases of fever among the inhabitants are extremely rare. The number becomes larger, and gives support to

<sup>1</sup> See the interesting study of a young Italian professor, Signor Nitti, *la Législation sociale en Italie, Revue d'économie politique*, 1892.

the popular prejudice on this subject, only when those patients are included who have contracted fever elsewhere, and are brought into the Hospital of San Spirito for treatment.<sup>1</sup>

This is now settled, and it is well that it is so. Unfortunately the bad name of the *Agro* is not undeserved; the whole Campagna, however, is not equally unwholesome. Its character in this respect varies in different years and in different localities. The low ground near the sea, abounding in swamps, is most dangerous. The sea itself, along the shore, presents equal danger, and the saying is that the man who sleeps on a boat anchored within half a mile of land, will wake with a malarial attack. However, the inland region as far as the foot of the mountains is also more or less threatened in its whole extent, and late statistics give this alarming average: in the Campagna on the right of the Tiber, twenty-three cases annually to the hundred inhabitants; and on the left, thirty-three.<sup>2</sup> Here we have, not the sole obstacle, but one of the most serious hindrances to cultivation, the cause of that depopulation of the *Agro* which has been a constant anxiety to all the successive governments of Rome.

For how long a time has this situation existed?

<sup>1</sup> See *Monografia della Città di Roma e della Campagna romana*. Article by Signor Guido Baccelli. Vol. I., *la Malaria di Roma*.

<sup>2</sup> *Relazione monografica della zona soggetta alle leggi sulla bonificazione agraria Roma, tip. nazionale di Bertera, 1892.*

This question I have put again and again to many competent persons, and I have been much pleased at the Latin erudition they have exhibited. In a city street or walking over the fields, without book or notes, they quote me, from memory, authors of every date. But they do not agree with one another: "Signor," says one, with that vivacity of manner which the question of malaria always calls forth, "the *Agro* was not formerly such as you see it now. Innumerable villas covered it, whose ruins are visible to this day. It was inhabited. It must have been healthful. Of this, writers give us innumerable proofs. Cicero, *In Verrem*, speaks of the admirable fertility of Tusculum, the Alban Hills and Civita-Lavinia. Strabo in his *Geography*, Pliny in his *Natural History*, praise the orchards of Tibur. Livy is enthusiastic in his eulogy of the river banks. All the way to Corneto and Castro, every place has its commendation in pages of the classic authors. You must understand it is the Barbarians, the *nazioni boreali*, who have caused all this evil."

On another day I talk with a great landowner of the Campagna,—he, also, a classic scholar,—who answers me thus: "The Barbarians? Doubtless they ravaged the *Agro*. But they destroyed only what there was to destroy. The ruins which remain to us—and they are not numerous—are those of palaces, with mosaic pavements and frescoed walls. Where are the villages and farm

houses? We find no trace of them. The Campagna has never been inhabited like the rest of Italy. The owners came for three months in the early season; patricians and freedmen, they all went away later; nobody remained but slaves. There was always fever. It cannot be doubted. Why else these many votive inscriptions: 'To the Goddess Fever,' 'To the Sacred Fever,' 'To the Great Fever' (*febri divæ, febri sanctæ, febri magnæ*)? And how frequent the allusions to pestilences desolating the *Agro*! These were, no doubt, all malarial diseases, aggravated by occasional extremes of heat. Nothing has changed; the steady line of tradition proves this."

It is plain to see that the first of these two men was a partisan of agrarian reforms, and the second was not. Their reference to classic authors was in the service of present interests. And I returned to the present, following their example.

Nor is it enough that malarial patients be carefully nursed. Medical science concerns itself with them. It experiments with all sorts of remedies. Besides quinine, the most efficient of all, yet accepted reluctantly, and in certain quarters much opposed by popular prejudice, the doctors employ arsenic, and recommend a fortifying diet. According to the rather ironical Tuscan saying: "*La cura della malaria sta nella pentola*"; and they recommend even certain domestic remedies, whose efficiency they consider remarkable; this one, for

example, whose recipe has a deep flavour: "Take a fresh lemon, cut it in thin slices, keeping the rind; boil it with three glasses of water in an earthen saucepan which has never been used for other purposes. When it has boiled away one-third, strain the liquid, squeezing out the residue, and leave it to cool overnight." Science has not, as yet, explained why this liquid has need of a whole night's rest in order to become of sovereign efficacy. But so it declares, following the ignorant generations who have handed the secret down. The most obstinate fevers are often conquered by this lemon *consomme*, which, in the absence of other soups, even a very poor Italian can obtain.<sup>1</sup>

But the true remedy lies in the sanitary improvement of the *Agro*. With all the discussion that still goes on as to the malarial principle and the manner of its propagation, there seems to be no doubt that it is produced by a damp soil, and developed as soon as the heat reaches 68° F. Now, the whole Roman Campagna is damp. Springs abound. Canevari, the engineer, counted ten thousand of them. Usually they have no outlet, and they cannot be absorbed by the earth any more than can the rainfall; for, under the arable soil, which varies in depth, the *Agro* has its natural pavement of ancient lava, impervious to moisture. Hence, as many swamps as there are springs, often

<sup>1</sup> See *Annali di Agricoltura*, 1884, second report *Sulla preservazione dell' uomo nei paesi di malaria*, by Professor Tommaso Crudeli.

invisible; and the great marshes of Ostia and Maccarese, of many thousand acres in extent, whose exhalations are carried on the sea-breezes as far as the foot of the mountains.<sup>1</sup>

To improve the condition of the *Agro!* It is not a matter of yesterday, this proposition of drying up the marshes, draining the low ground, colonizing the great plateau, subjecting to thorough cultivation this soil (which becomes less dangerous to the labourer, it is said, when ploughed up every year), planting tall-growing trees, which drink up the moisture with their roots and let the wind pass under their branches—the elm, the pine, the laurel, the eucalyptus. All through the centuries this has been the plan. And it seems that all these means have been employed, one after another, with the same lack of success. The Romans, the Papal Government, the French during their occupation, the Italians since they have taken possession of Rome, have striven in turn against this scourge. There were not less than seventy-five statutes on this question before those of 1878 and 1883, which are at present in force.

Many of these are curious. A first thing to be observed is that the Popes very early perceived and declared that the *latifundia*—the fact that

<sup>1</sup> Other theories, very different, have been set forth, notably one by Signor Tommaso Crudeli. I accept, without feeling qualified to approve or disprove, the explanation which guided the authors of the laws of 1878 and 1883.



such extensive tracts are in single ownerships—formed one of the great obstacles to improvement, while, at the same time, they always refused, notwithstanding the complaints of the people and the selfishness and inertia of the barons, to touch any property rights and make an agrarian law. As Pius VII. well said, a law of division “would be not only an act of illegality and of great injustice, but it would be more injurious than the continued toleration of ownerships too extensive and too few in number.” The Popes were limited, therefore, to indirect methods. Sixtus IV., renewing earlier decrees, permitted to all and singular to cultivate a third of any waste land, to whomsoever it belonged, monastery, chapter, noble, public or private owner, on the sole condition of notifying the owner and paying a royalty. The Campagna recovered life, and during many years great tracts were under cultivation. But almost immediately upon the Pontiff’s death the proprietors began to relieve themselves from this temporary expropriation. They forbade the transport of grain harvested upon the land, and bought it themselves at a price far below its value. Julius II. threatened to excommunicate them. Clement VIII. maintained the edict of Sixtus, and fixed the amount of the royalties to be paid to the owners.

Pius VI., who drained part of the Pontine marshes, undertook a new survey of the *Agro*.

Pius VII., changing the method, laid a special tax on all arable land situated within a radius of a mile from Rome that should be left fallow, and gave a bonus to every owner who, in the same zone, should have planted his ground or destined it to regular cultivation.<sup>1</sup>

Neither these measures, nor any other efforts made, having brought a lasting transformation, Pius IX. made an effort to induce the owners to replant the *Agro* with trees. He deposited ten thousand crowns<sup>2</sup> for the use of his Department of Agriculture. Every owner or farmer should receive twenty crowns for every hundred pine trees set out, fifteen crowns for every hundred olive, lemon, or orange trees, and ten crowns for every hundred elms or chestnuts. As a result of this law, more than a million trees were set out.

But what are a million trees in the vast Campagna? The same Pope took another initiative, truly bold and most interesting. It was his desire to enfranchise the *Agro* from the intolerable liabilities that lay upon it. A multitude of rights, whose origin it was usually impossible to explain—rights of way, of watering, of gleanage, and of pasturage in the fields and woods—restricted, in the interest of the community, the right of the owner, and barred the way to all progress.

For instance, we read, in very learned reports,

<sup>1</sup> See *Papes et paysans*, by G. Ardent, Paris, Gaunu, 1891.

<sup>2</sup> A crown (*écu*) is about 60 cents.

addressed to a congregation of cardinals,<sup>1</sup> that three-fifths of the territory of Nepi is subject to a right of pasturage; that at Viterbo, out of twenty thousand *rubbia* of ground, twelve thousand are thus burdened. The communes have a right to the grass. They divide into three parts these immense pasturages, which nominally belong to the private owners. One is occupied by the working cattle; the second produces hay, which is sold at auction for the benefit of the commune; in the third anyone may pasture his herds or flocks on payment of rent—to the commune, of course! The unfortunate owner gets what return he can from pieces of ground under cultivation, and these even he cannot increase, lest it should be to the detriment of the community. Accordingly pontifical edicts, at first made for special cases, but later changed into a general law, permitted the owners to free themselves by payments, either in money or in kind, from the burdens of pasturage. And, as a result of this law, the territory of the *Agro* was almost liberated.

No sooner had the Italian Government taken possession of Rome, than it was obliged to deal with the same question. Public opinion demanded this. Many partisans of the new order asserted,

<sup>1</sup> *I papi e l'agricoltura nei domini della S. Sede*, by Signor Milella; Roma, Pallotta, 1880. The *Riflessioni sull' agro romano*, at the end of the volume, are a remarkable dissertation, written with much ability and Roman spirit.

in speech and writing,—but, as I believe, unjustly,—that the Popes had done almost nothing for the Campagna. From the new régime was expected that which the old had not supplied. A commission was appointed as early as 1870 to prepare a general scheme for the improvement of the *Agro romano*. Around it a crowd of interests and passions were at work. Each man proposed his particular panacea. The most extraordinary suggestions were offered—as, for instance, that the creation of four large villages, of a thousand inhabitants each, should be decreed; or that a negro population should be colonized to cultivate the Campagna. The commission calmly pursued its work, under the direction of a man of great worth, Signor Ubaldino Peruzzi, an ex-syndic of Florence; and the results from this prolonged investigation, discussed and modified in the Chambers, became finally two laws—those of December 11, 1878, and of July 8, 1883.

The first of these laws is in relation to the *bonificamento idraulico*. It decreed first, at the expense of the state, great works of drainage of the marshes of Ostia and Maccarese, of the Isola Sacra, near Ostia, the valley of the Almo, and the Lago de' Tartari, on the road to Tivoli. It then committed to eighty-nine obligatory syndicates of proprietors—*consorzi*—the duty of laying out a system of water channels, of surrounding all the cultivated land with ditches, and of providing for

the escape of all stagnant water. Has this law been obeyed, and have its results been satisfactory? We reply in the affirmative. Companies have contracted for all the required engineering work, and have begun upon it. That the whole task is not yet completed, especially at Ostia and Maccarese, and that it has swallowed up already more than the 5,000,000 [\$1,000,000] estimated and originally voted, are surprises not uncommon when land and water are attacked. The owners, on their part, have executed, at least in most regions, the work required of them under the first head—that is to say, canalization. They have still to divide and drain their fields, and to fill in ponds and swamps. But this can all be easily done and promptly, if the Government is persistent.

Can we say the same of the law of July 8, 1883, which is far more important, and aims at nothing less than a complete transformation of the *Agro romano*? This is a most ambitious design. Within six months from the date of the law the owners of all lands within a radius of ten kilometres [ $6\frac{1}{4}$  miles] from the mile-stone of the Forum—whence its popular name, “The Law of the Ten Kilometres”—were required to lay before a special commission the improvements they proposed to make; to declare the extent of land that would henceforth be regularly kept under cultivation, how much they would plant in trees and how much in vines, what roads and ditches they proposed to

make, and a plan of the houses, barns, and stables they designed to build.

On failure to do this, or on failure to execute the works agreed upon, the land would be seized by the state, first paying an indemnity to the owner; and it would then be sold piecemeal at auction, the new proprietors being required to fulfil the obligations which the former owner had neglected.

The feeling caused by the promulgation of this law was great. The severe provisions which I have just mentioned affected not less than 118 domains, in all more than 50,000 acres. Their application would involve an expense of over 3,000,000 lire [\$600,000] by the owners of the land—that is to say, averaging, according to the estimate of the commission, 144 lire to the hectare [\$11.25 to the acre] on the right bank of the Tiber, and 201 [\$15.75] on the left. It was said, also, that these estimates were too low.

Such a measure could not be welcome. Nor was it. At the end of six months two owners had positively refused to have anything to say to the commission; twenty-five had accepted the terms; and the majority had made no reply at all, which is extremely Italian. But the administration was Italian also; it took its time, and gave time to the other side, not brutally going to the extent permitted by the law; and a long struggle began between the authorities, wishing to reform abuses,

and the persons interested, striving by all methods to maintain the position unchanged.

I hasten to come to the present situation. Since 1883 how much has been gained? The following is the sum of the results: at the end of 1891 one landowner had fully obeyed the law of the *bonifica*, Cavaliere Bertone, a Piedmontese, who had bought the Campanelle, a domain of 247 acres, almost entirely outside of the tén-kilometre belt, and, nevertheless, caused important works to be executed there. Next on the list are ten *tenute*, representing 4446 acres, which are very nearly in the required condition: Caffarella and Capo di Bove, the property of Prince Torlonia; Tor di Quinto, that of Prince Borghese; Tor Sapienza, that of Prince Lancelotti; Tre Fontane, belonging to the Trappist Fathers; Tor Marancio, to Conte di Merode; Quadrato, to the charitable society Pichi Lunati; Ponte di Nona, to Cavaliere Bertone; Marranella, to Signor Giuseppe Anconi; Valca and Valchetta, to the brothers Piacentini; and Torre nuova, to Prince Don Paolo Borghese.

In sixteen other domains the administration mentions partial improvements, and in twenty others insignificant ones. Finally, sixty-seven domains, comprising 27,170 acres, had not as yet felt the slightest effect from the law of 1883.<sup>1</sup>

And there seems to have been no further change since these documents, published in the year 1892. I made inquiry, and learned only this fact,

<sup>1</sup> *Agro romano, Relazione monografica, etc.*

that the purchaser of one of the two domains which had been confiscated in virtue of the law, had renounced his purchase and restored the land to the state, which had sold it to him, not being able, he said, to carry out the programme of the too expensive improvements imposed by the specifications.

To conclude, it had often been asserted by the promoters of reform that the use of the pure mountain water which is brought to Rome by the aqueducts would be of great service in reducing the number of malarial cases on the Campagna. Most praiseworthy efforts have been made in this direction. The commune placed at the disposal of proprietors on the left bank of the Tiber 70,633 cubic feet of the Acqua Marcia. Twenty-two miles of pipe were laid, and eleven centres of distribution established—near S. Agnese fuori, at Tor di Schiavi on the via Prenestina, at the Osteria dei Spiriti, on the via Appia nuova, at Capo di Bove, etc. Experience demonstrates that, wherever the Marcian water is used instead of water from the wells, the chances of immunity are increased. Nevertheless, out of the 70,633 cubic feet offered to those concerned, there were purchasers for only 10,600.

The results, therefore, are not absolutely nothing, as has been asserted; but they are still very small. The laws concerning this improvement of the Campagna have not effected the rapid trans-



formation which was expected. Where, then, is the fault? Does it lie with the owners, with the farmers, or in the laws themselves? Is there any possibility of improving these laws? Or will it be enough to continue endeavouring to enforce them? And is it not too hasty a judgment by which, thus early, we seek to decide upon a series of measures designed to change things that are almost immutable—rural traditions and popular prejudices?

I have put these questions to several persons, and I have received the clearest and the most contradictory replies. In seeking to group them, it has seemed to me that these answers can be reduced to three: the reply of the *Mercante di Campagna*, that of the great landowner, and a third, more difficult to define, which is the opinion of some proprietors, of many men in public life, of many socialists whose opinion has a revolutionary tone, and of many peaceable citizens of humble station, who see the affairs of the Roman Campagna close at hand and have a perfectly clear idea of the progress needed, without having the leisure or the mental capacity to decide upon the means toward it. The following are the three forms of opinion which have been expressed to me, each one ten times at least.

*The Mercante di Campagna*: "The law of 1883 is an absurd law, signor. Who are the men that have imposed it upon us? They are Tuscans,

Lombards, Piedmontese, and men from Southern Italy—persons in no way competent to judge, accustomed to see a certain system of agriculture, and thinking it the easiest thing in the world to make it applicable to the Roman Campagna by mere decree. Their regular cultivation is like vaccination—everybody must take it. Unfortunately, they are totally ignorant of the special conditions made for us by the climate and by the nature of the soil. They wish to plant vineyards? But the vine requires assiduous care. For three months the Campagna is uninhabitable; and there is nothing which our experience has made clearer than the fact that, during that time, the grape dries up and the vine perishes. They again require us to break up the natural soil and sow corn and oats. What happens? It is a fact that very often the layer of earth is so thin that nothing but grass can grow on it; if you break it up, the least shower washes it away, the rock is exposed; you get no grain, and you lose the grass that you had before. Believe me, signor, and do what these men who talk so much about the Campagna have never done—go and look at it. You will see that it is by no means the frightful wilderness that men call it; that it is cultivated—not, indeed, as Tuscany and Lombardy are, but just as much as it can be. There was something to be done in the way of drainage. This has been done. Any further attempt is neither useful nor rational.”

*The Great Landowner:* "It is perfectly easy, my dear sir, to preach a reform of the *Agro*, when one does not own any part of it. Opinions upon agriculture at Rome are part of the political creed. All your good radicals, all your politicians who have not an olive tree outside the walls, who never go upon the Campagna, who know it only by having passed through it on the railway, are decided partisans of the *bonifcamento*. For ourselves, who own land, it is different; the question is not so easy to decide. We get five per cent. from our domains, managed as they now are, and as they have been for centuries. The proposal is made us to substitute grain fields for the grass lands, which we now let very profitably. But to break up the ground is expensive; the grain sells but poorly; and it has been proved at many points, notably in the dried-up—the 'improved'—bed of Lago Fucino, that grain exhausts our soil very rapidly. It is simply a proposition to us to lose our money. There is no ground for enthusiasm here. Let the Government relieve us of burdens on the land, let them help us, and, sceptical though we are, we shall not object to the trying of experiments. For there has been exaggeration as to the malaria."

A man who had been talking in this way with me, in one of the aristocratic clubhouses of Rome, had just come in from a drive on the Campagna. He stopped just here, without considering the

connection of ideas. "*Garçon*," he cried, "a glass of vermouth and some quinine! A good deal of quinine, waiter," he added.

*The Partisan of Reforms:* "It is just as well to own frankly that the framers of the law of 1883 committed some mistakes. For example, they did not take into account the fact that certain parts of the Campagna are not susceptible of cultivation. Their ten kilometres mean nothing; and the College of Agricultural Engineers has lately prepared, and is bringing before the public, a new law which changes this irrational belt into a great fan, having Rome for the base, and for the two sides the via Casilina and the via Ardeatina. Imperfections can all be corrected; but the one thing of importance is that we should have a law for the improvement of the *Agro*, and that this law be carried out. The Italians are emigrating by armies every year, and here we have at our gates vacant land where hundreds of thousands might be fed. Is this to be endured? Can it be permitted that the self-interest of a few should be a perpetual obstacle to the sanitary improvement of the Campagna, to its being brought under cultivation, to the prosperity of Rome itself—for, thus surrounded by fever, Rome must always remain, as now, a little city? And what are the arguments which these owners offer? That grain is ruinous to the land? No doubt it is, if grain is sown indefinitely in a land that is never enriched.

That they have not money enough to meet expenses like these? That they can only borrow at eight and ten per cent.? I admit this. What we desire is the creation of a great agricultural society which shall be obliged by its statutes to lend money at a reasonable rate. All the landowners of the *Agro* will then be in a position to accomplish what the law requires. Then we can say to them: 'Obey, or give place to us. Rome can no longer tolerate this Campagna, so unworthy of her and so dangerous to her population.' The society will then buy the land which its owners refuse to improve, will divide it up, and will lend money to the farmers who come there to live, emigrating thither from the interior, instead of going far away in search of fortune; and it will permit them by annual payments slowly to acquire ownership. Towns will spring up in the more healthful portions, and the men at work by day in the plains will return to sleep on the higher lands. These desolate, useless stretches of ground will be no longer seen, nor these bands of labourers treated like cattle. Visit the Campagna yourself, signor; observe with your own eyes this destitution. You will then understand why thirty thousand petitioners have begged the Chambers to decree the *bonifica*; and you will better understand the extreme importance of the question. For, I assure you, men are very much excited on this subject, and the proprietors of the *Agro*, obstinate in their

refusal to listen, will incur in the end a terrible storm of popular indignation."

I remember well the contagious enthusiasm with which many men talked to me thus, the dark eyes glittering with excitement, the prophetic tone of the invariable menace at the end. Men of the middle class, accountants, employees of the princely *computisterie*, deputies belonging to advanced groups in the Chambers, all expressed themselves with the same vigour.

The partisans of the *status quo* were no less positive. I adopted the one idea in which they all agreed, which was to go out to see for myself. And delicious were the days that I passed upon the *Agro*, east, north, and west of Rome—captivated more and more by this strange land, by the problems to which it gives rise, and by the dreams which haunt it.

I do not assume to have been a discoverer there. I only propose to tell simply what appeared new to a stranger; what I observed, heard, or seemed able to divine in these varied expeditions. And to this end I determined on four, across very dissimilar domains, in opposite directions upon the Campagna.

#### ON THE NORTH OF ROME.

I leave the city by the Porta del Popolo; a friend accompanies me. We follow the old Flaminian Way. At once, around us, the coun-

try assumes that amplitude of lines and that air of desolation which make it so beautiful. There are no pretty details, no shady nooks, cascades, or even groups of leafy trees—joy of the Tuscan land—but a succession of broad spaces, irregular of surface, green, specked with patches of pozzolana in the foreground, growing blue in the distance; girt with a belt of mountains whose snows have changing tints as the hours go by. The labour of man has left hardly a trace here. Like the sparrow-hawks flying over it in every direction, the eye finds no resting-place. It roams amid accidents of scenery that are always the same—a hill, abruptly cut away, gnawed at its base by a muddy brook, a ruin on the top of a hillock, a stake fence many thousand feet long, hemming in a flock of sheep; it lingers, astonished at the monotonous sadness of each separate thing and the distinct grandeur of the whole effect. It is an altogether new impression, peculiar to the place. We cross the Tiber at Ponte Molle, the Milvian Bridge. In a field, which is used as a racecourse, the old dairy farm of Tor di Quinto, a long yellow building with red roofs is now a riding school for the cavalry. No horsemen are visible. But everywhere, in the vigorous aftermath, I see daisies, the under side pink, as large as our ox-eye daisy of June. And that is so pleasant to see in December! In other respects, the season surprises one. The air is warm, the yellow Tiber

winds between grassy banks, and the pines have green tufts, on these cliffs at the left, which are called Poussin's Rocks.

We reach the high ground of two domains situated on the limit of the ten-kilometre belt, which are conceded in perpetual lease to my companion, Signor P. The first, Valchetta, belongs to the Chapter of S. Peter; the second, Prima Porta, to the Chapter of S. John Lateran. A man on horseback awaits us and leads the way. We leave the highway, taking a little trap which he has brought, and, at once, the aspect of the country reveals a capable and active farmer. Along the road, ascending between two hedges of thorn, stretch fields of lucerne, which give five crops between May and September, meadows full of tall clover, fields prepared for beets,—a new crop in the *Agro*,—then a wood of young pine trees, growing finely, at the foot of the rocky plateau on which lie the farm buildings. They are much like those that we see in France, but the spur of land on which they are built divides through the middle a narrow valley—the valley where was fought the battle of the three hundred Fabii against the men of Veii. While I stand, leaning between two rosemary trees, and gaze at this famous brook, the Cremera,—a tiny stream in the fields upon which I look down, which are narrow as two green roads,—the old farmer has gathered me a handful of roses. He secures it to the apron of the carriage,



and then conducts me to the cow-house—a rarity on the Campagna—where are lodged, during the night, fifty Swiss cows, whose milk is sold in Rome. As I enter, I read on a slate hung at the door the product of the evening's milking, sixty-seven gallons; and above the stalls in this admirable building, which is worthy of an agricultural school, a series of expressive names: *Galatina*, *Invidiosa*, *Sfacciata*, *Bellabocca*, *Monachella*. The four hundred other milch cattle, of Roman race, live outdoors, night and day. They are half wild, and to milk them the keepers go out upon the Campagna in an ox-cart at eleven o'clock at night.

Through the hilly fields we go across to Prima Porta. The soil, everywhere enriched from the pasturage of sheep, is covered with thick grass. Only on the top of the rolling ground and on some steep slopes here and there, I notice bare patches where the rock comes to the surface. "Here are made attempts at cultivation," Signor P. remarks; "the soil, which we had broken up, in obedience to the law, was washed away by the rains. You may judge from this if the law is everywhere applicable."

We drove a long time, without meeting anyone, over the endless undulations of the pasture-ground, which is crowned, here and there, with patches of coppice, like mildew on a large scale. And as it was somewhat late when we had left the city, twilight began to come on. The distant

Tiber was lustrous in places, and the grain fields had a bluish tinge. A flock of sparrow-hawks went over, seeking some tree known to themselves only, far away in the distance. With the darkness came a certain feeling of depression. We were at the foot of an enormous hillock of an olive green. "Here is the shepherd's cabin," my companion said, pointing upward. On the summit, a huge circular cabin with a conical roof was outlined against the golden sky. Wicker palisades make a black line around the base of the hillock. Coming nearer, I see that the cabin roof is made of branches and reeds, and is surmounted by a wooden cross, with the spear and the ladder. The arrival of our vehicle brings out three men from within. They salute, and the oldest of the three approaches, hat in hand. "*Buona sera!*" he says, and with him we enter this abode, of which he is the master. The hut that these Roman shepherds have built for themselves is spacious and convenient. It is to last them two years or three; and then the encampment will be selected elsewhere.

Here we have the true pastoral life—on one side are the shepherds' beds, in two rows, one almost on the level of the ground, the other four feet higher; opposite are tables where the new cheeses are lying; and there are all the utensils and implements of dairy work. In the centre of the floor there is quite a deep hole in the earth, where

the remains of a fagot are burning. The wind, passing freely through, from one door to the other, keeps the fire brisk and drives away the smoke. "I think it will be cold to-night, *Eccellenza*," says the head shepherd; and, as he speaks, he watches, with half closed eyes, a bluish star rising above the mists of the horizon.

"Are the sheep in?"

"They are on the way, *Eccellenza*; I have heard those that are coming from the west."

"Meanwhile, show my friend the chairs that you make in the winter evenings."

Upon this two men bring out chairs of red wood, whose backs and seats and arms are very finely carved by hand. The designs vary but little; there are crosses, chalices, monstrances with unequal rays, and laurel branches around the principal object—truly graceful and with artistic curves.

Signor P. says to me that the twenty-six shepherds who occupy this cabin leave it late in June to return to the far-away village, now buried in the snows of the Apennines, where dwell their wives and children, their mothers and their sweet-hearts. "They are a long time making preparation for the journey," he says, "taking great care to carry everything they will need for themselves and for the sheep. To be sure of doing this they abandon the house entirely two or three days before they go away, and make a camp at some distance, that they may know if they have left behind

anything that they will require. Then, by slow stages, they lead the flocks toward the mountains."

We went outside. In ten minutes the land had grown almost dark, while the sky, heavy with flickering mists on the horizon, remained pale overhead. A dull noise came up from the valley, and something moving, like a sheet of fog undulating in the wind, covered the lower slopes of the hill. It is the four thousand sheep of the domain in a compact mass. By degrees I distinguish the white dogs leaping around them, the shepherds on foot hemming them in, their brown cloaks dragging on the grass, and the leader on horseback who brings up the rear. Altogether, without being hurried, they come up, with a continuous motion and a sound of rolling pebbles, like a tide of the ocean. My companion hurries me to the palisade I had noticed surrounding the hillock. A series of small holes in it let the sheep in, one by one, and as they enter, they pass by so many sentry boxes, in each of which is a man. The rapidity with which this immense flock is milked is something marvellous. Twenty-six shepherds are there in line. The sheep, massed outside, crowd toward the twenty-six entrances. Entering into a narrow passageway, they are caught with a wooden fork over the neck, are milked in an instant, let go, and are followed by others. In less than an hour the milking is all done.

As we go down the slope, the night is almost black around us. A thick mist fills the air. The veiled stars sleep above the Tiber. Trotting down over the grass, the horse suddenly shies. It is a lad of fourteen, a young shepherd, who stands, cap in hand, as we go by. "Is that you, my lad? You are late," the master says; and the boy replies, unabashed, with a gay young voice that is pleasant to hear, in the great silence of the *Agro*. When he has gone past us, Signor P. relates an incident of two months ago. This lad was keeping four hundred sheep by the river, and the idea came into his mind to put his cap on a lamb's head. He secured the cap with a reed, then let the animal loose among the flock; whereupon a fearful panic broke out. Maddened at the sight of this hatted lamb running after them, the sheep galloped wildly around and around the pasture, and then would have ended by plunging into the river, had not the *vergaro*, perceiving the danger from afar, dashed down from the hilltop on horseback, and reached the bank just in time to turn them back.

And with the story of this little adventure the time passes, the carriage slips rapidly over the grass, and night settles over the land.

#### SANTA-MARIA.

A gray, rainy morning, the 8th of December. It is the Feast of the Immacolata, and the *fešta* of the village Santa-Maria, far distant, fifteen miles

away from the city. I set off alone in a cab. The rain is falling, heavy, icy; it seems to make the horse still leaner, and his wet skin shows the action of the bones. Oh, the slow, dull road! At intervals it is crossed by rivulets of mud. It winds about, ascends a little, descends a little, never much, across pastures which the cloud shuts in on every side. There is no horizon; only lines of wall cutting stretches of grass; here and there a herd of cattle, motionless and stupid in the pouring rain. Nothing moves but ourselves. There is not the faintest sound except our wheels crushing the wet earth. How plainly I see that the sole beauty of this wilderness, like the sole beauty of life, lies in its distant prospects and in its sky!

The isolated taverns, the poor *osterie* placed every few miles by the roadside, are shut close against the rain. There are people within telling each other stories of strayed horses and dead sheep, and of the encroachments of neighbours, meanwhile drinking the wine of Tivoli. But the sound of their voices is lost up the chimney. We keep on in this little solitude whose scenery seems to go along with us, so completely the same is it between the walls of blinding rain.

Finally, about eleven o'clock, the figure of a horseman, wrapped in a cloak, becomes visible on the right side of the road. He leads a second horse by the bridle. It is the *vergaro*, the head shepherd, sent out to meet me. I leap on the

horse's back, and the cab, turning, is soon out of sight, while we advance through the new grain, which is extremely beautiful.

"How many hectares are cultivated here, *vergato*?"

"Three hundred and forty out of eighteen hundred [864 acres out of 4446]."

Flocks of small birds rise before the horses' feet. We ascend a hill, trotting up in the drain channels, and then go down a long slope, always covered with the same mantle of young wheat. At the foot Signor P. joins us, on a fine horse. He is the farmer of this *tenuta*, as well as of the other which I have visited. It is said at Rome that he is one of the best agriculturists upon the Campagna. And I am confirmed in this idea as I again see the same admirable plan of cultivation, the choice kinds of grain, and the fields, fertilized after the same methods as at Prima Porta, with their uncommon wealth of grass and clover.

Here, however, the surface of the ground is different. It is much more irregular. As we approach the farm buildings, the hills crowd upon each other, separated by gorges. Many are wooded, but the large part serve only as pastures. On the summit of one, in the light blue of the Italian middle distance,—for the sun has come out and the clouds are gone,—I perceive ruins. "A ruined village?" "Yes." "How ruined?" "Some say by malaria." "And others?" "By

the act of some great landowner. These owners used gradually to buy up the country, and then drive away the inhabitants, so that they might be the masters. But I am not sure; it was a great while ago."

As the *vergaro* spoke we were descending a gentle slope, by a very admirable road, bordered on one side with magnificent clumps of laurel,—the poet's laurel,—a remnant of a Sacred Grove where the Muses might still weep undisturbed. Some of the branches had been stripped of their leaves, and I asked my companion, in much surprise, who had plundered his laurels. "The Germans," he said. And it appeared that this is one of the sources of income from this domain and those adjacent. The Germans buy these laurel-leaves by the hundred-weight, and use them in the manufacture of Prussian blue.

I was not expecting such an answer as this, or to see the leaves of Italian laurels go in that direction. We enter the courtyard of the farm by a handsome gateway, and dismount near a heap of bales of leaves tied up compactly, and ready to be sent away.

I was shown a sheepfold containing animals of pure breed, bought at the national French *bergerie* at Rambouillet. These sheep cross so well with the native Italian breed that a neighbouring proprietor had no sooner perceived the excellent results obtained by Signor P.'s initiative than he



telegraphed to Rambouillet for ewes and wethers of the same breed. "He telegraphed," said my host, evidently much impressed by the act; "he placed himself completely at the discretion of the French manager, and so honourable are your great national establishments that he received animals in every respect as fine as those which I had chosen on the spot."

However, without saying too much about it,—for I am considered here to be quite a farmer, and it is always a pity to destroy a flattering illusion,—I find a much keener pleasure in walking about the courtyard where all the farm hands are now assembled. The place is full of men in black clothes, some wearing cloaks, all rather harsh of aspect, talking together in groups. They came to attend high mass, on occasion of the *festa* of their patroness, the Madonna, which has been sung in the very ancient church attached to the château at the back of the courtyard.

Sometimes a group start together and go into a long, low building, the right wing of the courtyard. Following, I find them smoking and drinking in one of the rooms occupied by that personage, indispensable and generally prosperous on the Roman Campagna, the trader. Each farm is like a little town, which must contain all that is needful for itself and for the inhabited environs, if such there be. It is the sole resource, the centre of supplies. The trader at Santa-Maria, a Swiss,

whose pink-and-white complexion was on odd contrast to the bearded and bronzed faces of his customers, sells salt pork, groceries, wines, material for clothing, whatever is required. I purchase a box of Egyptian cigarettes, and distribute them, to the great delight of the black-beards, who show an unexpected capability of smiling. I learn that this trader has a flourishing business of 50,000 lire [\$10,000] a year, and that he pays a rent of 500 [\$100] a month.

One red cassock, and then a second, cross the courtyard. These are students of the Austro-Hungarian College, who have come out with their superiors to attend the *festa*. The domain is an ecclesiastical patrimony, granted by some Pope long ago, for the support of the Austrian seminary in Rome. The passage of these students through the courtyard indicates that the dignitaries of the college will soon come out, and that dinner will be announced. I have only time to look at the garden on the other side.

What an enchanting place it must be in the spring—this sheltered garden, with its orange and mandarin trees! Even in winter it has its charm. One imagines the completed outline of the graceful trees which are now leafless, and where the flower-beds will be, and how lovely the outlook over fields already showing the springing grain; the lemon trees, more delicate, it seems, are defended against frost by a roof of reeds resting

against the wall. I have seen this movable cover before, and the perfume which escapes from it brings to my mind Sicily, Palermo, the Conca d' Oro.

The bell rings. The court is instantly half deserted. We sit down at table in a whitewashed hall in the second story of the manor, at the back of the courtyard. I have never in my life, I believe, seen a more astonishing variety of guests. Around the table, covered with white linen and decorated with apples, pears, and fennel-roots, there are the rector of the college and the superintendent of the domain, both Austrians, and wearing the black cassock; Signor P., a Roman; the Swiss sutler, in his jacket; the curate of the farm; the guard, in blue livery piped with red, and silver on the collar; the chief farmer, the chief butcher, the chief shepherd and his retired predecessor; lastly, two students in scarlet cassocks, like cardinals.

It is an ancient and praiseworthy custom, thus to invite the principal employees of the domain to an annual banquet. They are respectful, but not abashed or servile. The conversation, partly in Roman patois and partly in French, half escapes them. They eat royally, like vigorous men to whom life on horseback gives a prodigious appetite. But when they talk it is with much vivacity. And the most alive, the most interesting person among them all is, perhaps, the former head shepherd, an old man of seventy-two, broad

of chest and shoulder, the face sunburned and tanned, the beard only just beginning to turn gray, curled in twists like the beards of Greek statues; the hair abundant and tossed about in great locks. He has spent all his life among the shepherds and the flocks of the domain: in the winter and spring at Santa-Maria; in the summer among the mountains. It would have killed him if, when he was retired from service, he had been separated from his flock, his comrades, and the cabin. Accordingly, he is allowed, although no longer the responsible head, to return in the autumn with the *masseria*. He still spends his time on horseback, keeping watch over the men and the animals.

"It is because the air is good at Santa-Maria," he says, lifting his yellow eyes. "There are not many of my age on the Campagna."

After this, being questioned by the manager, he relates in short sentences, with rather a shame-faced air, how he was attacked at nightfall, two years ago, by the famous Anzuini. The brigand, accompanied by one of his band, entered the cabin where the *vergaro* was with four other shepherds. Anzuini placed the muzzle of his gun at the old man's head.

"What did you do, my poor friend?"

"I understood what he meant," the shepherd said; "I gave him what I had, 170 lire." The next morning the brigand was at work, in the

same fashion, near Viterbo. He had gone twenty miles on foot during the night.

I ought to add, for the peace of mind of those who might be tempted to visit Santa-Maria, that Anzuini was afterward captured. This industry, with time, has grown difficult; and our mothers, who tell of their wedding journey between Rome and Naples as a venturesome expedition, were the last who could speak thus without falsehood. At most, you will be told, if you insist, that there are still alive two or three brigands who have given up the business, retiring on a pension, contemporaneously with their former judges. There will be mentioned to you, by name, certain peaceable persons who, having given up the somewhat brusque habits of their youth, are now in the receipt of stipends, that they may not be tempted to fall back into those habits! Their neighbours are delighted thus to keep them in the paths of virtue. Prince X. pays a regular pension to Tiburzio, whom everybody remembers—Tiburzio of Viterbo. At least, so it is reported, and it has been said in print by a Sicilian, Luigi Capnana,<sup>1</sup> who is eager to defend his poor and lovely island from the misplaced accusations of the Italian mainland. As for the prince, I fancy, if anyone had the frankness to question him, he would smile enigmatically, and twist the end of his brown moustache, and would give no answer. Is

<sup>1</sup> *La Sicilia e il brigantaggio. Roma, Editore il Folchetto, 1892.*

not a man at liberty to protect his property by any guards that it pleases him to employ?

#### EASTWARD FROM ROME.

I will designate in no other way the point that I have visited to-day, because I have too serious criticisms to make. It is enough to say that the domain of which I speak is beyond the reach of "the ten-kilometre law," and that it belongs to a great Roman noble.

It is past noon as we emerge, my guide and I, from the walled inclosure surrounding the farm buildings, which still retain their feudal aspect. Labour has been resumed. On the floor of the barn, men and women are husking the Indian corn which lies in a golden heap at their feet. They have an air of distress and fatigue. The *caporale*, their chief, the contractor for the band, a dwarfish figure with keen eyes, goes from one barn to another. Neither as he passes, nor when we go by, is a single head turned with a smile, or a mouth opened with a word of recognition or of greeting. Why should there be? what are we to them? They feel themselves strangers on this domain where no one but the *caporale* knows them by name; neither the head farmer, nor the owner, nor the guard, nor any person. They are only a flock of mountaineers from the Abruzzi, delivered here on contract for the harvesting; in a month they will return home, and next year they

will be at work on the other side of the Campagna.

"Are they numerous on the *tenuta*? I ask of the guide.

"There are about four hundred here now," he says, "but in the summer not more than a dozen."

"This is the usual condition of the farms in the *Agro*," the guide adds, divining my thoughts; "They are not happy. If it were not for their religion, they would revolt."

I can readily believe him.

We follow a chain of hills, and then a valley where a herd of cows is pastured. They have those handsome, widespread horns, long and fine, and that smooth, gray coat, which painters have never faithfully represented. Around them the pasturage is poor; it extends on before us, as far as a distant hillock whose curve is outlined upon the sky, surmounted by a shepherd's cabin. Our horses break into a gallop, as we ascend the hill, and the ground rings under their feet. An old woman appears at the door of the cabin. She, at least, smiles—this old woman!

"Will you have a fresh egg?" she asks, and my companion replies that he would like it.

"Lavinia! Lavinia!" the old woman calls, and a little tangle-haired girl runs to get an egg from the hen-house adjacent to the cabin. She hands it up to my companion, who, with a large pin, pierces the two ends, drinks off the yolk and white

almost at one swallow, and throws down the unbroken shell. "This is the Roman way!" he says.

We go on, descending the rapid slope toward an immense fallow field, steaming in the sun. In the first third of this field, wrapped in a golden mist, which shines like a halo around them, a band of a hundred peasants, their backs turned toward us, are slowly going forward breaking up the clods with pick and shovel. Not one is inactive. The flash of the blades runs uninterrupted from one end of the line to the other. The women are in red, the men in darker colours. One young fellow has a white pigeon on his shoulder; the bird flutters his wings, without taking flight, every time that his master stoops, following the rhythmic drop of the spade. Alone among this human herd, two overseers, tall, booted, are not at work, but leaning on their staves, survey the labourers. It is, perhaps, an injustice for me to think of this, but in spite of myself the spectacle leads my mind back to the ancient days, when, under the superintendence of a few favoured ones, slaves cultivated the *latifundia* of the *Agro*. The difference is slight. I ask my guide where these people are lodged, and he replies that there are two camps at some distance. Learning that we can visit both within an hour, I decide to do so.

Behind this battalion of rude clod-breakers we pass, and not one turns his head; our horses step noiselessly, besides, over the soft earth. But for



this irregular line of small black points, the vast Campagna is deserted. Deserted are the slopes that look like fronts of earthworks or like cliffs eroded by some furious inundation, and crowned with a few trees; deserted the fields; deserted the waste land, stony, surrounded with embankments which end with a Roman arch, isolated, covered with ivy, mysterious as the one letter of some obliterated inscription. Beyond the bridge a great marsh, half drained, or rather a stretch of very low ground, through which streamlets wander and where still stand a few broken stalks of Indian corn.

We advance very slowly, and see in front, a little to the right, a sort of denuded, oval hill, having the form and colour of a flattened pear, its stem lying in the marsh. Lines of huts rear themselves upon it, the nearer ones almost blending with the ground, the remoter clearly outlined against the sky. This, then, is the village! We urge our horses forward.

There is a first bridge, made of sticks, poorly bound together, thrown across a muddy channel; then a miserable, uncultivated little island; then a second branch of the stream, in which half a dozen ragged girls are washing clothes. They raise themselves a little as we pass, without dropping the handful of wet linen. But no one smiles. There is not a gleam of happy life in these young eyes; nothing but the reproach of discouraged poverty—the unjust reproach addressed to the

whole world—which hurts you when you see it. I feel it follow us after we have passed. And in front, on the edge of the hillock, where the village stands, the same look, loaded with the same reproach, meets us again.

A group of old women and children, motionless, seated, are warming themselves in the sun. We pass, without a salutation from anyone, along the passageway between the rows of huts. There are seventy-five in all, making four or five streets upon the rising ground. They are all built in the same way—two palisades of reeds from the marsh below, bent together and secured at the top by a transverse pole; another triangular palisade making the wall at the back; and another in front, in which an opening for entrance is cut out.

This is the shelter which a proprietor, a *grand seigneur*, who receives 100,000 lire annually from this domain alone, deigns to offer to his labourers. We are but a few miles away from Rome, in a land of very ancient civilization, and here are huts with which no savage would be content, where live, for nine months in the year, more than three hundred persons, men and women, where children are born, and where others fall ill and die. I am so surprised and shocked at this spectacle that I dismount to examine it more closely.

Stooping almost double, I enter through a hole cut in the palisade, and lift my head in the presence of a very beautiful young woman, with the

almond-shaped eyes and the perfect features of the purest classic type. She is surrounded by smoke, for in a hole in the ground, in this cabin without a chimney, corn-waste is smouldering under an earthen pot. The first thing I notice is the great gold ring which hangs at her ear. I question her, and she tells me that she is a native of the Sabina, three years married, and that she has two children. I ask where are the little ones, and she points out a little boy in trousers, on the floor near the bed at the back of the hut; the bed, that is to say, the heap of cornstalks and grass on some kind of trestle not clearly discernible through the smoke, with a soiled covering stretched over it, and for a blanket against the cold of the night a mat of plaited rushes! She appears gentle and resigned. I ask for the second child, and she leans smiling over a basket on the ground, quite near the fire. The rest of the furniture you could hold in one hand—two or three small earthen pots, a tin cover, a package of herbs—this last, no doubt, as a protection against fever.

It makes one's heart ache. Now, I can better understand the excitement which centres around this question of the *Agro romano*. Nothing to be done! Is it really possible to make an assertion like this? Yes; at Rome, in a drawing room, men will gravely unfold their theory of life in the open air, and praise the healthfulness of light encampments like tents! But here, on

the spot, when you take note of the total indifference of the owner, when you see the complete desolation in which these poor farm hands are left, the absence of all aid, of all care, of all comfort, you ask yourself if the men who talk in that way have seen the Roman Campagna; and you feel that on the day when socialism shall get the better of the long patience of these nomads of the *Agro*, the day when they shall begin, in their turn, a Servile War, certain self-centred owners of Roman soil will reap nothing more than what they have sown.

I express my opinion very distinctly to the man who accompanies me, as we ride away from the village.

"You have not seen all," he says to me. "But you are able now to judge of the condition of our peasants. This is called lodging them. Yes, they have permission to cut the reeds; and, in other cases, the owners offer them houses of a kind which I will show you later on."

I recognized in the brief speech of my companion that tone of irony covering an extreme of feeling which I had many times observed in talking with Romans of the lower class who were interested in the affairs of the Campagna. The face remains impassive. Only the eyes speak after the lips have ceased talking.

"And is there no one," I said, "who sets an example of better things?"

"There are a few. There is Prince Felice Borghese, who has done much good and spent much money, at Fossa Nuova. There are two or three more. But most of the landowners are satisfied if they get their quarterly rent in advance; and they think they are square with everybody because everybody is square with them. Come a little to the left, signor. The earth is too wet just here."

And, indeed, at the moment we had to make a circuit to avoid a streak of marsh. Three mules passed us, loaded with the corn waste which serves as fuel for the peasants of the domain. Then we struck higher ground, and after a quarter of an hour came to the cattle-path through the field, which led to a large building roofed with tiles, on a hill-top.

"This is where the farm hands are lodged who come for a short season, as at sowing or harvest," my guide said.

The building was only a barn, with a kitchen at one end. I brought my horse up to the side of the wall, and leaned in at a window. There was a musty odour, as of a messroom, mingled with smoke. All around the hall was a row of beds on the ground, and five feet higher another row, supported by a light wooden framework. Each row of beds was double. The beds themselves were heaps of leaves or straw, covered here with a ragged sheet, there with a worn-out petticoat. Men, women, married couples, the young, the old, the

sick, sleep here in complete promiscuity. This is not merely an insufficient shelter, like what I have just seen. This is different, this mere heap of humanity, this barn where hygiene counts for little and morals for nothing at all. Underlying each case the same neglect.

Some women, hearing us approach, came out. One, very tall, very old, with her gray hair in elf-locks over her ears, and frightfully sunken eyes, looked at me a moment, then said:

“*Siete il medico?*”

“Alas, no! I am not the doctor. Have you someone sick?”

“There are three with fever. One of them has been sick four days.”

My companion shrugged his shoulders; he seemed vexed.

“You have not notified the *caporale?*” he said.

“Oh, yes!” the woman rejoined meekly; “but the doctor has not come.”

I gave a little money to these poor creatures, and we rode on.

On my way back to the city I saw a splendid sight. In a field which was axe-shaped, broadening in the distance, fifteen pair of gray oxen were ploughing in line. The fifteen ploughs were exactly aligned, opening and throwing out earth which was a reddish-purple colour. These are the same implements of husbandry that Vergil saw—an iron

wedge, two wooden wings in front of a joist, a round platform behind, traversed by an upright stick. On the platform stands the labourer, with one hand holding by the upright, with the other using the goad. And these beautiful, primitive forms of labour,—the immense oxen, the small plough, the man, motionless and stately,—were moving slowly forward, leaving half the field furrowed and steaming behind them.

Then, into the space already gone over by them, in their wake, a sixteenth plough, driven by a young man of twenty, came suddenly and rapidly. No doubt the youth had noticed us, and our presence stimulated his vanity. His movements were supple and graceful in the extreme. It seemed as if he were driving horses instead of oxen, so quickly did he trace in every direction, over the already broken soil, water channels for carrying off the rains. He appeared to be running over the ground for his pleasure,—drawn by these great beasts, trained expressly for the work, who turned sharply, almost grazed the trees in passing, came back towards us, their horns high, the wrinkled skin on the shoulders quivering,—and, meanwhile, he followed with his eye a route of slopes invisible to us. He smiled now and then, this Roman youth, as if delighting to show to the two Barbarians lingering on an adjacent hill-top what a Roman could do with his team, two gray Campagna oxen.

## MACCARESE.

This is, again, an unwholesome region, on the west of Rome, northward from Ostia, and near the sea.

The *tenuta* of Maccarese, which I am going to see, one of the largest of the *Agro romano*, about fourteen thousand acres, is part of the ancient Campo Salino, the saline marshes whence the Sabines obtained their salt. The neighbourhood and the infiltrations of the salt water, the impossibility of carrying off by natural channels the water of springs and rains,—for in certain places the ground is a foot lower than the sea-level,—render a residence here dangerous, especially in the summer, when the intense heat draws up and diffuses the miasma.

According to the statistics of a country doctor living in this region, the average of fever cases annually is as follows: farmers and labourers, who remain uninterruptedly, ninety-five per cent.; overseers and superintendents, who are better fed, and who are often in Rome for a longer or shorter stay, forty per cent.; owners resident in Rome, who come out into the country, but are careful not to remain over night during the bad season, fifteen per cent. It has been necessary to establish sanitary stations from point to point, and fever patients are now cared for on the spot. But the medical men in charge of twenty or twenty-five domains must lose a good deal of valuable time



going from one to another. The former system is regretted by some; I myself am not in a position to decide between the two. The old method was to send every person into the city, to the Hospital San Spirito. In the time of the Popes any man who brought in a fever patient received a reward of two lire [forty cents]. Taking this and charity together, it appears that very few of the poor were neglected when attacked with fever. Means of prevention are taken by the railway company whose line traverses this part of the Campagna. The employees all the way to Grosseto, in Tuscany, have only alternate days of duty on the Campagna, being retained the other days in Rome.

A condition of things like this could not fail to attract the attention of the authors of the project for the improvement of the *Agro*. Two plans were proposed—one, to fill up the salt marshes with earth brought from other regions; the second, to draw off the water by steam pumps. The latter idea prevailed, and I am to see close at hand the result.

I leave Rome very early in the morning with the son of a former ambassador from France to Rome, and with Prince Camillo Rospigliosi, younger brother of Don Giuseppe, who will meet us at Maccarese. Both the brothers were once pontifical zouaves. The elder (who is dark) now belongs to the "White" world; the younger

(who is fair) remains "Black." They are joint owners of the *tenuta* of Maccarese, held by this family since the year 1675; in great part they manage it themselves, are perfectly in sympathy with each other, and are thorough types of the Roman patrician, having relations of friendship and marriage among the European aristocracy, speaking French, thoroughly men of the present day, and courteous in the highest degree. The railway by which we go, that of Civita Vecchia, is regarded as fruitful in accidents. It seems that the embankments easily give way under rains and from the action of concealed springs. As a matter of fact, the extremely slow rate at which we cross a bridge over the Tiber suggests to the mind a vague anxiety. But nothing goes wrong.

We leave on the left the eucalyptus grove of the celebrated Abbey Tre Fontane, which has not been sufficient itself alone to purify the Campagna, and, indeed, but poorly protects the inmates of the abbey. The aspect of the Campagna here is extremely sad: swampy pastures extending as far as the eye can see, here and there spotted with dark-green clumps of box. On the right the ground is higher and less monotonous. There are thickets of wild olive, pistachio, judas tree, dogwood, arbutus, holly; a dozen kinds of shrubs, bound together by half withered climbing plants, among which I recognize the cottony umbel of the clem-

atis. The chief owner of these thickets is the Hospital San Spirito; over twelve miles, as the bird flies, belongs to it. Here the state might have a field for experiment, and show what it understands by colonization, clearing, and sanitary improvement on the great domains. The law leaves this perfectly within its competence, but there seems a hesitation about making the attempt. Far away, in very beautiful outlines, the blue mountains, capped with snow, limit the plain and the view.

The train stops at Maccarese, at a solitary station alone in the flat Campagna, and surrounded by a few clumps of eucalyptus trees. Don Giuseppe comes toward us, and seven or eight horses are ready for us outside the palisades. It is stinging cold. We wrap ourselves warmly and mount; Don Giuseppe, Don Camillo, the young Baron Baude, two *butteri* of the domain, and myself. Our horses are of the Roman breed, nervous, habituated to two gaits only, the walk and the gallop. There has been courteously destined for me an English saddle, which I regret, having a secret liking for the enormous Roman saddle, high in the back and front, made of light and supple skin that lets the leg cling fast to the horse's side. We cross the railway and are out on the Campagna without a road in sight, a grassy plain vast as the pampas. There is nothing to be seen in this wilderness but lines of fences, dividing the plain at

remote intervals, and some far-off leafless trees, forming avenues leading nowhither. The earthy yellow of the dead vegetation extends indefinitely, somewhat gilded on ridges by the morning sun. There is a grand, wild poetry about the scene. A fox gets away from under our feet, out of a clump of boxwood, and for more than a half mile we see the tawny flash of his coat and his tail in air as he runs. A barrier is before us; one of the *butteri*, saying not a word, spurs his horse to a gallop; then, sticking his iron-pointed lance into the end of this movable gate, opens it wide; we pass through, and the wooden bars drop back into place behind us.

A first canal, dug in obedience to the law concerning the *Bonifica del Agro*. The descent is so slight that the water appears stagnant. We cross on a little bridge without parapets. On the right a drove of mares; on the left a *tronco* of Roman milch cows. The grass is better; and further on in this dry part of the domain begins a fine field of grain. A young man, perhaps twenty years of age, walks between the rows, and taps continuously with his knuckles on a biscuit-tin, which is suspended from his neck. He earns 1.25 [twenty-five cents] a day in thus scaring away the larks; a crowd of little gray wings beat the air around him, fly up a short distance, then alight further on, not frightened, scarcely driven away for the moment. I see, far off, half a mile distant, a brown mass.

"What is that?"

"That is part of our herd of buffaloes, which I have had driven up for you to see," rejoins Don Giuseppe.

Three hundred animals are feeding upon a narrow hillock covered with brush, surrounded by several of the men, two mounted, the others on foot. We ride in among the herd, and for the first time I examine close at hand, and in life, this animal, which before I had seen only in pictures and in dreams. The impression is not at all what I expected. Instead of those savage creatures that the popular imagination calumniates, assuredly, I find milch cows, black, with pretty heads and very soft, intelligent eyes. The horns are curled up near the ears; the head is meagre; the body too heavy, attired in a pelt with the hair much worn off, which seems to stir in great plaques like that of the elephant. The general aspect denotes timidity of character. It appears, however, that the mothers with their first calves are dangerous; also that the old males are formidable when they take to the thicket. Some bearded muzzles of bulls, lowered as our horses pass, seem to confirm the popular opinion.

While we are thus surrounded by the moving mass of buffaloes, just on the top of the mound, Don Camillo turns to the chief herdsman, the *minorense*.

"What is the name of that cow just turning round?"

"*Scarpe fine e stivaletti* (fine shoes and boots)," was the answer.

"That is a vendor's cry in the streets of Rome," Don Camillo said, addressing me. And he inquired the name of another.

"*Più sta e più va peggio* (the more it goes on, the worse it is)."

"And that little one, with her head on one side?"

"*Fa la spia ma fala bene* (she plays the spy, but does it well)."

"And this big one?"

"*C'è gran guerra, in alto mare* (there is great war in the open sea)."

"You know," Don Camillo explained, "we are very near the sea; and in rough weather the noise of the waves is heard all over Maccarese."

"I understand. But do you mean to say that your three hundred buffaloes have names?"

"You mean the thousand of the whole domain? Certainly they have. Neither day nor night do the herdsmen make any mistake. And observe, the names are all sentences divided into two hemistichs, each accented on the penult. Never was a buffalo cow on all the Campagna called by a single word, as 'Star,' or 'Europa,' or 'Nera.'"

"And why not?"

"Because the long names have always been the custom. Besides this, the animals would not so readily hear names less musical. During the night

they are shut up within the picket inclosures that you have noticed. The calves are shut up in other inclosures. At an hour which varies in the different domains—with us it is four in the morning—the herdsmen who are to milk the buffalo cows take up their position between the two inclosures in the open ground. Then they call out two or three names, as '*C'è gran guerra in alto mare!*' with great stress on the accentuated syllables, *guer-ra* and *ma-re*. The animals hear their names; they struggle through the crowd and come up to the gate. Meantime the herdsman, turning toward the inclosure in which the calves are shut up, repeats the same cry, for the young ones have their mothers' names. Then the calves, who, ever since they were born have heard themselves called thus, '*C'è gran guerra in alto mare!*' or '*Scarpe fine e stivaletti!*' on their part come to the gate. Then these gates are opened, and the mothers and children meet. As soon as the latter have had as much milk as is allowed them, they are driven away with blows on the neck; and then the buffalo cows submit peaceably to be milked by the herdsman, which otherwise they would not do."

This explanation, though so odd, is really the literal truth. It has been given me over and over again by farmers quite unknown to each other, not only on the Campagna, but also in Salerno and in Calabria, wherever herds of buffaloes are kept.

Coming down from this hillock, we go off to the

right, toward the sea. The grass grows scantier. Water birds, especially lapwings, the under side of the wing silvery white, rise around us. Their sweet and penetrating cry is all that enlivens the desolate plain. The ground slopes continuously. We arrive at a sort of white lake, spotted with brown tufts. This is a dry point in the marsh of Maccarese. Two chimneys, rising above the trees of a grove in front of us, indicate where the engines are set up which draw off the water and pour it into the sea. At periods of heavy rains the pumps work night and day. If they stopped, the damp soil covered with a crust of salt, on which we are walking, would very soon disappear under three feet of water. The results obtained here, at an annual expense by Government of 60,000 lire [\$12,000], are, therefore, always precarious. They allow portions here and there to be cultivated or seeded for grass. The rest, the main part of the *Campo Salino*, must be long worked upon before it will bring in the interest of expense so heavy as that.

On the other side of the marsh is a wood of century-old oaks, twisted, knotty, torn asunder or beheaded by storms and time, like many of those which form the famous forests of the Pontine Marshes. Then the fields begin again. We rode with all speed straight toward the buffalo farm, which resembles the shepherds' cabins at Prima Porta, except that the circular wall bearing the



thatched roof is here built of stone. The last milking stands to curdle in great tubs. Cheeses hung up in a neighbouring barn are cured in the thick smoke which rises from a fire of green branches.

A second gallop brings us, over fields where the trees have been cut down, to a pine wood almost of a century's growth. Making a circuit, we come suddenly upon this venerable and sculptural forest. How well Puvis de Chavannes would render the poetry of these beautiful, simple lines and colours! The plain, of a green dulled by the trampling of the flocks, crossed by this wall of splendid, branchless, tawny-red tree-trunks, all spreading out together seventy feet above the soil, and touching each other with their sombre tops; no light falling from the sky upon the moss at their feet, but rays coming through from the other edge of the wood, on the side toward the sea, throwing plaques of gold high upon these trunks, like lamps hung from the piers of arches. The sea is breaking at a little distance upon the sad shore. Is it thence that come these motionless gleams, or are there little, invisible stagnant ponds that serve as mirrors and adorn the wood with these fairy moons? Formerly a belt of forests like this formed a wall all along the coast of the *Agro romano*, and perhaps served to protect it against the unwholesome wind which blows from the water's edge. This the old Romans assert.

"What beautiful trees, Don Camillo!"

"More beautiful than useful; the dampness is so great that the wood cannot be used for building. Do you know, here we are about the middle of the domain, which is longer than it is broad."

"How much have you northward?"

"About four miles."

"And the other way?"

"Not quite four and a half."

To go to the cow farm we follow the edge of a strip of 300 hectares [741 acres] of grain, forming an unbroken curve around the marsh. The lapwings are so abundant here and so tame, that we could easily shoot them if we had brought guns.

Twice we give chase to enormous bulls. One of them, branded on the haunch with the cipher of the domain and the figures 88, is the handsomest animal that one could imagine. His coat, gray on the flanks, becomes black on the withers, and the head is dark gray. We leave him raging, stopped by a barrier, ploughing up the earth with his hoofs, and we enter the farm buildings. An outer staircase leads to a very long hall in the second story. At the opposite end, near the fire, a numerous group of farm labourers, men and women, are at dinner. The apartment serves also as a dormitory. But it is not of the kind which I have seen elsewhere. The beds stand in locked closets along the wall. At this moment several doors are open. I approach one. A candle, in a

movable rest, is fastened to the inside of this wooden screen. On each side of it is a map entitled *Imperium romanum*. The owner, the peasant who sleeps here, must be passionately fond of reading; a little above the bed, in the shadow, I can see, nailed against the wall, two shelves, and they are filled with books! The library of a Roman cowherd! And I shall forever regret that I did not see what they were; but we were in haste.

Returning, I questioned my host as to the condition of the labourers of the Campagna, not those that we had just seen, but the transient harvesters so badly lodged, so sadly neglected.

"In the present condition of our rural affairs," he said, "you can have no idea how difficult it is to change anything whatever. We are dependent on these *caporali*, who bring us the Abruzzi labourers. I ask the one I employ to engage for us the same people year after year, so that we can know them a little better; and attach them in some degree to the domain. He makes me pay him more for doing this, because it gives him more trouble! By way of amelioration I have made, though we are outside the ten kilometre limit, separate lodgings for the married couples. There are a great many other things that we should gladly do, but we are so heavily taxed! If Government would exempt us for five years, we would transform things!"

Finally we dismount at the Château de Mac-

carese, where we are to breakfast. The *butteri* lead away the horses. Some hunting dogs, who have escaped from their kennel, come leaping around us. A blacksmith's hammer is heard from a corner of the courtyard, where he is making a cart-wheel.

Civilized life reappears in the person of an old butler, who leads the way into the enormous feudal residence, flanked with two square towers, where a regiment could be lodged in case of need. Through the windows of the hall where the table is laid the eye wanders over the limitless green expanse, here and there traversed by a line of trees or flecked by a cluster of elms; it resembles, and in the spring must especially resemble, the English country.

I desired much to know the yield, in detail, of a great domain like this; and the two Princes Rospigliosi, who are most accomplished agriculturists and have the accounts of their *tenuta* kept with great accuracy, have kindly furnished me with the figures.

This is what I have learned. The domain of Maccarese, which consists, as I have said, of 5560 hectares [13,733 acres], is half cultivated by the owners themselves, and half rented. At a time when the whole was leased, it brought in 160,000 lire [\$32,000], from which the land tax had to be deducted. At the present time the part which is let, comprising almost all the arable land, or at least nearly all now under cultivation, 400 hec-

tares [988 acres] gives a return of 86,000 lire [\$17,200]. The eight hundred cattle and a hundred horses that are fed on this land belong to the princes; the farmer who hires the land having only a *masseria* of three or four thousand sheep.

The rest of the domain, managed by the princes, of which only 60 hectares [150 acres] are cultivated land, had, on the 30th of September of the past year, 1050 buffaloes, 99 horses, 22 oxen, 114 cows and bulls. Now, such a herd of buffaloes brings in about 40,000 lire [\$8000] annually. In a single month it often gives a value of 3500 lire [\$700] in cheese. The cows' milk can be sold only in winter and spring.

As for the taxes, always paid by the owners, even on what is let, they have prodigiously increased. In 1855 they were, for Maccarese, 2000 crowns, that is, about 10,000 lire [\$2000]. At the present time must be added the taxes of the state, of the province, and of the commune; also the taxes upon cattle: five lire for a bull, three for a cow, one and a half for a calf. The entire tax for the domain of Maccarese is as follows:

<i>Imposta governativa,</i>	.	.	.	.	32,406 lire 42 cen.
" <i>provinciale,</i>	.	.	.	.	1,370 " 44 "
" <i>comunale,</i>	.	.	.	.	3,206 " 68 "
Tax on cattle,	.	.	.	.	2,770
					<hr/>
					39,753 " 54 "
					[\$7,950.70]

Adding to this sum the tax of about 3000 lire [\$600] that the tenant farmer pays on his cattle, it appears that a domain which was formerly let for 160,000 lire [\$32,000], and would not bring in as much as that now, owing to the present crisis in the affairs of the Campagna, is loaded with over 42,000 lire [\$8400] of taxes.

When, at nightfall, I was taking leave of my hosts—who remained at Maccarese—to return to the city, two sportsmen appeared in their long swamp-boots. They had been shooting all day over the domain, and came in, their game bags full. Although only one of them was known to the Princes Rospigliosi, and neither had obtained permission, they were very pleasantly received—which probably would not have been the case in France—when they came, quite at their ease, to shake hands with the owners; for a law peculiar to the *Agro* permits anyone to shoot over the domains, whether public or private.

I was soon on my way to the station in a light carriage, driven by one of our morning's horsemen. On the way I inquired if any improvement had been felt in the air of Maccarese.

"Signor, there is always some fever; but the more serious cases are less frequent than formerly," was the answer.

I asked to what cause this comparative exemption was attributed.

"Some say," my driver replied, "that the sea-

sons happen to be better, as has been at times the case heretofore. For my part, I believe it is due to the improvements made in the land. But they are still incomplete," he added. "The Campagna is so large—so large!"

He made a gesture, a broad semicircular sweep of the hand. And before us, to right and left, the grassy plain stretched away without an undulation, without a barrier. The sky, pale blue overhead, pink in the west, was still bright above the infinite, russet-coloured expanse. Nothing stirred; not a flock of sheep in sight, not a bird even. Nothing broke the vast solitude. A slight vapour, with a perfume of crushed herbs, rose from the soil. And, from point to point, far away in the increasing darkness of the vast field, a sparkle that quickly vanished, indicated standing water.

### III.

#### SOUTHERN ITALY.

TO urge their horses, the Norwegians imitate the sound of a kiss, the Arabs roll their *r*'s, the Neapolitan driver seems to bark—"Wah! wah!" And all the horses seem to understand. They are very numerous in Naples, go very fast, and are not expensive to keep. They are the prime luxury, the absolutely necessary display for every family desirous to have or to keep a certain social rank. The most impoverished cannot dispense with their carriage. They may economize in the table, never entertaining and stinting themselves to the cheapest bill of fare; but their carriage they must have for the five o'clock drive on the via Caracciolo. It is true that the barouche, with two horses and the driver, can be hired for 300 lire [\$60] a month.

The second luxury which Neapolitan custom requires is a box at the San Carlo. There are three performances a week, and three series—*Tornata A*, *B*, and *C*. The first is the most fashionable. My neighbour the baron would on no account fail of this double duty: he has his horses and his opera box. It is said that his patrimony is impaired. Very probably it is; these things are not uncom-



mon in Italy. I have no certain information as to that, but it is a fact that he still employs sixteen servants. Two only are lodged in the house—the concierge and his wife. The others come for the day. The baroness, a woman of fashion, rises late. At about half-past eleven she goes out for a *passeggiata* under the trees by the sea, where the Prince of Naples often walks. She has very brilliant eyes and an exquisite pale complexion. She is usually accompanied by her two daughters, less attractive than herself, never by her husband. About one o'clock the family successively—the husband, the wife, the son, already through with his studies and a gentleman of leisure—return to breakfast. A Neapolitan breakfast is a very small affair—a little macaroni cooked with tomatoes, and the cold meat that is always served at a sideboard. Then a siesta. At five o'clock the carriage is at the door. Whether the dinner is more abundant than the breakfast I cannot say. In the evening everyone goes out to the theatre or to some social affair, returning shortly after midnight.

I am surprised to hear the baron lament so often that he has land in the Vesuvian region. It is a fine country from here to Caserta. Nothing could be more fertile. It bears five crops annually, not counting the vintage from vines which run over the ground on green and red arches from tree to tree. Labour is extremely cheap. I am told, however, that the farmer never makes money, and

often cannot even pay his rent. "I have lived in Naples thirty years," says my informant, "and I have constantly observed this, but the reason for it I have never been able to discover." My baron may be land-poor, then, with taxes that he must pay, and rents that he is not sure of receiving regularly; but I scarcely believe this.

However it may be, he belongs *de jure* and *de facto* to this Neapolitan aristocracy, which is cordial and agreeable, and is always generous, even when in financial difficulties. As the Neapolitan populace have exactly these same traits, *plus* poverty and *minus* culture, it results that the city is the most generally pleasing in all Italy. It is also the one where life is truly most simple, least hampered by conventionalities. Everybody meets everybody, everybody leads in some degree a kind of outdoor life, and a certain free and easy condition of things is the result. Do you think, for instance, there is any other city where you would meet, as I did here, at ten o'clock in the morning, in one of the handsomest and most crowded streets, a flock of turkeys driven to sell from door to door, or would see, as I have seen, an old lieutenant in full uniform selecting and bargaining for a wash-basin in the open street, and this without attracting any attention from the passers-by?

I ask myself whether Naples may not be in danger of losing in some degree the popular character of her aspect and the freedom of her ways. So

much simplicity and naïveté arise from the fact that her fishermen, her sellers of *frutti de mare*, her makers of *pizza* and of fireworks, her vendors of boiled chestnuts, and many of her artisans, live in quarters which are protected by their extreme poverty against city ordinances—a kind of shadow where colours are kept intact. The population which lives in this way in parts of the city entirely given up to it being so much the more numerous, inevitably imposes somewhat of its own habits of life upon the class whom education renders vastly its superior. But the old quarters are disappearing. Immense municipal improvements are going on. One great work is the completion of the old system of sewerage, carrying the conduits by way of Posilipo out to the Bay of Gaëta; another is the cutting of new streets and boulevards through—or rather the carrying them over—many of the slums in the lower part of the town, which are to be filled in and completely obliterated. This is called by the authorities the *resanimento*, but the populace call it the *sventramento*, of Naples. The Government and the municipality together, sharing equally the expense, have already employed 100,000,000 lire [\$20,000,000] in this work.

In the two years since I was last in Naples the improvement has been great. The broad avenues, beginning midway of the hill, have extended so far that they seem likely before long to reach to the Bay. What do the poor people down there in the

low ground think of this? What becomes of them when their wretched houses are destroyed? What will remain of those quarters made famous by their poverty, so well described by Fucini in his letters? To answer these questions one must penetrate the ill-famed, malodorous, ill-ventilated, unwholesome region of the Porto. But it is difficult to go there alone. Though there is no serious danger, or at least no more than that of leaving behind one a watch or a port-monnaie, it is really not possible to visit these *fondachi* and their lanes unless accompanied and guided by someone who knows the place, and, if possible, is a *persona grata*.

So I made known my wishes to one of my Neapolitan friends, and was extremely successful. "You shall be guided," he said, "by a person who has authority in this kingdom where the police themselves are often powerless." And at the hour and place agreed upon, near the Porto, I found awaiting me a man of lofty stature and attractive appearance, wearing a broad-brimmed soft hat, the Cavaliere Antonio d'Auria, a councillor of the province of Naples and president of the Central Labour Association. He had the air and manner of a true leader, and, as I soon perceived, also the authority of one. He was not alone. With us were to go two newspaper men, my friend, Professor N., and several other persons unknown to me, but evidently familiar with the quarter we visited.

Leaving the street where we had met, we entered another parallel to the quays. We went in, two by two, for the passage was narrow and filthy, under an archway, sixty feet long, which gave entrance into a lane. And what a deplorable scene of material dilapidation and of human suffering! What a spectacle for the stranger coming with the illusion of a Naples all gaiety and happy outdoor life! Overhead there is but a narrow ribbon of blue sky, in part obscured by the rags that flutter from the windows; and below, only a slice of infected air between the houses, with their irregular windows and their walls stained with long streaks of green mildew. A second archway at the left gives access to an inner court, itself very narrow; in the centre, a well, surrounded by heaps of filth and black mud. This well furnishes the daily supply of water for all the neighbourhood. An outside wooden staircase ascends from this inhabited gulf; heads appear at the different landings, women and children, by no means merry, but pale and weary. They look at us anxiously. What are these men doing here, these strangers, in this region of hunger? We are thought to be deputies on some errand of inspection. Then one of the tenants recognizes Signor d'Auria, and a wan smile comes over the faces that just now were defiant. Shortly we are surrounded by a crowd of unkempt women, half-naked children, men still holding in their hands a deck of cards marked with signs whose

meaning is to me unknown. Our party are saying one to another: "This was the place of rendezvous for the fraternity of the *mala vita*, some years ago." "The *camorristi* met here when they were preparing to strike a blow." "Such or such a crime was committed in this *vicolo*, and the criminal has never been discovered."

We visited, successively, the *fondaco Pietralella*, the *fondaco delle Stelle*, the *fondaco Freddo*, the *fondaco Verde*, the *fondaco Santa-Anna*. An old woman is fanning with a bit of pasteboard the fire of a *brasero*, wherein, in the middle of the muddy lane, she is cooking green pine cones, of which the seeds are considered edible. She stops us as we pass, and asks us to see where she lives. Following her, I enter a corridor, and after some twenty-five feet of perfect darkness, lighting a match, she shows me a sort of hole, windowless, receiving air and light only from this passageway. "I pay three lire [60 cents] a month for this," she says. I am struck with the old woman's pitiable condition, and am about to empty my purse into her hands when my companion whispers: "Take care! We should never get out of here." And, indeed, the rumour of our presence has already spread all through the quarter, and the crowd grows thick about us. Our slightest gesture is observed. If we seem about to give, all arms are stretched out.

We clamber into an *entresol*, where five little chil-

dren lie asleep on a bed and the mother is combing her hair. There is no table, and, indeed, no other furniture than the bed except one chair. On the floor is a saucepan and a spoon. Across the chair lies a pink *fichu* of some light woollen material, which the mother will put on, probably, when she goes out for her day's work in some family of the town just beneath. As we pass near a window of the ground floor my neighbour says, "Look!" And he adds, though the thing is easy to see: "*Sono delle donne di male affari.*" With a glance I explore the low room, where several women of repulsive aspect and in ragged clothing, lounging in chairs or on a packing case with a canvas cover, watch us as we go by. At the back of the room a small lamp is burning before—yes, before a print of the Virgin pasted upon the wall! Nor is it an isolated instance. Even in these wretched creatures the Neapolitan piety still lives; abject as they are, they still look to the Madonna for deliverance, and the lamp burns testifying to this hope.

"Now, look up there," says Signor d'Auria. He points out the dismantled buildings that close this blind alley in which we are—the yawning chasms in the walls, the windows without casements, the heaps of laths which, falling from above, have caught on some projecting beam. The tenants have moved out. On a level with the fourth floor a street is advancing, as broad as a whole block of these ancient buildings. It ex-

tends two heavy beams, like rails, above the shattered partitions. It is completed almost to the edge of the mass of ruins. The white outlines of its new houses rise against the sky, and still further diminish the daylight in this *fondaco*, which is destined soon to disappear.

This is the new city, threatening, impending, which at no distant day will have buried beneath it the débris of these barracks of humble life, where so many generations have lived and suffered, have left this world with inconceivable regret; where there have been gloomy dramas, despairing deeds, lives of mysterious wickedness, and also acts of self-devotion and charity forever unknown, innocent loves and brief joys; and, at least now and then, a few notes of life's sweetest song. And all is now to perish!

Emerging from these frightful slums, we traverse streets and squares which are, as a rule, unknown to the admirers of the Bay. I mean the streets and squares of which the small tradesmen have taken entire possession, transforming them into a public bazaar. Fish, fruit, household implements of every kind, are in heaps upon the pavement. No carriage would try to make its way here. In the open air furnaces smoke, over which are cooking the primitive dishes of the Neapolitan ordinary—macaroni in oil, *pizza*, chestnuts, little fried mullets. Nor are the shoe-dealers and the old-iron vendors infrequent here.



Purchasers in crowds are moving about among the stalls, but as you watch them closely you observe that there are not more than a score of customers to each vendor. As a matter of fact, the people who carry on this little traffic depend exclusively for patronage upon their near neighbours. Half of the tenants in a court will be the customers of one man. There are established reputations here and lines of custom. Nobody can fry pepper-pods like this fat old woman; nobody tells fortunes so well as this girl, who also sells tickets in an unauthorized lottery, while openly offering for sale only woollen waistcoats and shawls of brilliant hue.

This fact is to be borne in mind in judging of the *resanimento*. As I walked along with my companions another thing attracted my notice. Once, twice, five times, ten times, the leader of our party is accosted, detained, implored, by people begging him to see that they have their rights. Now it is a pretty girl with hair in a pointed knot and with tragic mien, who grasps him boldly by the arm. "Signor Councillor, please to look here! I was selling my Indian figs when the *questurini* came. They took away my cart! They say I have no right to sell in the street! The villains! You must help me!" Whereupon the Signor Councillor obligingly tackles the policeman on the subject of the pretty fig-girl. Or it is a man, who pulls him into a corner and recites the story of his griev-

ance; and Signor d'Auria promises to see the judge. Then comes a woman running, followed by three or four children and the old mother, who can hardly walk. "Signor Councillor, isn't this horrible? They have turned us out of the house! They will not let us stay any longer on account of the new street that is coming in. But the street has not got here yet; and where can we go to sleep to-night? They have fastened up our doors, and we cannot get in. Oh, the wicked law, that is made against us poor people!" She talks in a loud voice, and gesticulates, so that the passers-by stop to listen, and a crowd collects. They fill the lane in which we are and clamour with her against the authorities.

We are quite surrounded, and Signor d'Auria, who can be seen and heard above all heads, standing with his back to a half-demolished wall, makes an address. He explains the necessity of the work and its future benefits to all, and recommends patience with present inconveniences. It is evident that he is much beloved. The group disperses, and we are left alone, except for the woman, who keeps on talking for a while in a lower voice, and then also goes away, apparently quite satisfied.

"You see," says Signor d'Auria, "I have my hands full. I come here every day, and there is always something requiring attention."

"Are these your constituents?"

"Oh, no! Most of these people cannot read or write, and very few pay the five-lire tax."

"But how do you settle these cases? For instance, this woman turned out of doors—did you provide her with a night's lodging?"

"Oh, no! But I can always help them with a little money. I beg from my friends, and matters can generally be arranged. Our Neapolitan people are so resigned, so easy-tempered. You saw her; she went away smiling. The poor find it hard to get anyone to listen to them. Lawyers and officials and the policemen will scarcely ever let them say a word. You see, I listen, and that makes them like me so well."

We made our way up, through many round-about ways, across the ruins, toward the quarters whose extension is to swallow up the regions we have just visited. I am told about the last cholera season in Naples.

"It was a fact, signor, that in these houses over the ruins of which we are now walking, and in these *fondachi* which you have just now visited, there were more than a thousand deaths a day. Very early the epidemic became violent, and you would never guess how this happened! It was the lottery, signor, that caused it. You know, the passion of the Neapolitans is for the *lotto*! You know, also, that they have a preference for certain numbers, especially those which they call the Madonna's figures—8, 13, and 84. Now, on the

last day of August, 1884, the *ambo* of the Madonna was drawn. All the poor in Naples rejoiced. Each man got his ten, fifteen, or twenty lire; and the day being Sunday, you should have seen this starved and thirsty multitude eat and drink! The restaurants and taverns were crowded from morning till night. The sellers of melons and sherbets had nothing left; and the following day, Monday, the cholera, which had been very light, suddenly became severe, with 350 fatal results."

Evidently all these lanes and alleys, these pestilential courts which we have just visited, merit no regrets; and the idea of throwing new streets over these quarters is not in itself a bad one—quite the contrary. But these new avenues which we saw from below, and in which we are now walking, have one serious fault. It had been already mentioned to me, but it grows clearer as I see them more closely. They are bordered with palaces, with very grand houses built for the rich, and, by the way, are not, as yet, all provided with tenants! There has been a wholesale destruction of houses for the poor, and nothing substituted in their place. This is the evil; here we have the cause of the great disturbance caused by the *resanimento* in this world of poverty and hunger. These poor creatures, driven out of their unwholesome lairs, are not able to pay the higher prices in the tenement-houses for the working class which have been built, and still less able because, the new

buildings being on the very outskirts of the city, these poor people would find themselves completely in exile there, losing the custom of their fifteen, twenty, or hundred neighbours, upon which their prosperity depended. The crisis is very serious. "Besides," my companion added, "in the new quarters, as you will see, the houses are all to be filled with these little vendors and artisans, as the houses in this quarter will all be taken by people in easy circumstances. Now, the old quarters of the city, even these which you have just visited, are not all occupied by people of one class. In these very lanes of the Porto, behind their sombre walls, there still live people of the mercantile class, dealers in silk and woollens and cottons, and owners of fishing-boats. These ancient ties of neighbourhood, very helpful to the poor, offering them their best chance of being known and assisted, are now to be all broken. Hence, Naples complains."

Whereupon I reflected that our fashion of building cities might, indeed, be finer in arrangement and more beautiful than in former times; but that it was certainly less fraternal.

Signor d'Auria left us here, returning into the Porto, and only some of our party went, in two carriages, to visit the artisan quarters. I will describe only one of these—*Santa-Anna alle Paludi*, built on waste ground and gardens beyond the railway station. Its aspect is very commonplace—

broad streets, which intersect each other at right angles, bordered with huge angular buildings, much as in Rome. I notice only two original things: there are garlands of colocynths at the shop-doors, tomatoes in clusters drying along the walls, frying going on in the open air, an odour of oil, heaps of shawls of that bright rose-pink beloved by the *ragazze*, a general effect transferred hither from the old quarters; and, secondly, the *porte-cochères* of these new buildings. How is it possible to build houses like these, with entrances so handsome, for the Neapolitan labouring classes! And what rent can they be expected to pay?

One of our party lifts the knocker at a fine broad door, belonging to a sort of palace in four stories. The concierge comes to us through a paved vestibule, very neatly kept. Opposite is a square staircase, all in granite. At the left a glazed door opens upon a great court, entirely surrounded by buildings. We go up as far as the third story, to have an idea of the medium apartments in this new quarter. The building can accommodate thirty-three families. The first apartment that we visit consists of three rooms, and is occupied by four sisters, of whom one has two children. They receive us very willingly on being told that I am a stranger, interested in seeing everything in Naples. The rooms were in perfect order; the white walls much decorated with prints or framed photographs. In the kitchen a gray turkey was

walking about under the table, and two top-knot pigeons cooed from the window-ledge.

"How much do you pay, signora, for this nice apartment?"

"Twenty-six lire [\$5.20] a month."

"And you are very well suited with it?"

"Perfectly. Our neighbours have only two rooms, but they pay less—seventeen lire."

The right-hand neighbour has no turkey, but he keeps a hen. He is an old journeyman cabinet-maker, who is not employed by the nobility or the bank. He assures us that he has no fault to find with the lodgings, and also that his hen gives him an egg every day. The third household is quite young, and the handsome girl who shows us the apartment does not need to be asked whether she is content. This appears from the smile she gives us, from the coral hair-pin stuck proudly in her crisped hair; also from the absence of turkey, pigeon, or hen. Her man is in the city, and will presently come home. He is a *lustroscarpe*—a bootblack—she tells us.

Upon the whole, the apartments are good, but the price can suit only those who have money saved up, or the very young, who postpone their saving to some later day. The real poor, who are driven out of the Porto, can find no shelter here. And I have no idea what is to become of them in such a cruel moment.

Strangers who go to see the Grotto del Cane

will never forget a visit to the Vicaria, if the happy thought occurs to them of making it. The place is nearer, and it is more amusing. The street leading to the courthouse is called, naturally enough, the via del Tribunale. It has always been long, narrow, abounding in shops, and crowded with dwellings; but it is less exclusive now than formerly, and one no longer sees on the walls of the Hospital della Pace this inscription, so amusingly worded: *In questa via, non possono habitare ne meretrici, ne soldati, ne studenti, ne simili genti*—"In this street may dwell neither filles de joie, nor soldiers, nor students, nor people of that sort." The stone on which these words were cut is in the Museum of San Martino, and the spirit which dictated them—how far away that is from the times in which we live!

A young Neapolitan lawyer is my guide. "We are about three thousand here," he tells me, "who may use the name, but happily we do not all practise. The palace is getting noisy already. Listen!"

It is half-past twelve, and many are hastening in, like ourselves, under the porticoes of the damp, sombre old building, shored up on every side, and full of the buzzing of a crowd. We also go up the well-worn stone stairs, at the top of which is a passageway with a lunch counter. Here advocates and clerks and amateurs buy the sandwich, the bit of cheese, the dried fruit, or the sweet lemon,



and the cigar, hard and black as ebony, which make it possible to spend the whole day in the courtroom. At the left is the Court of Appeals; at the right the civil tribunal, with its eleven rooms.

We go to the left, and enter the outer hall, the *Salone* of the court, where a crowd of people are moving about, who accost one another, embrace, talk together in loud tones, finish what they had to say with a gesture or two, then separate; and, shortly, meet other acquaintances. There are many men here who have business, and there are advocates with cases, of course, but also, as my friend explains, there are many dilettanti. All this crowd fills the centre of the hall, whose sides belong to the discreet and silent gentry of the pen. Along the walls, between the doors which give access to the various courtrooms, lawyers' clerks, seated at both sides of enormous tables, prepare writs and motions. Three or four of these tables, at intervals, are let to a tobacco seller.

At the end of the hall is a bench where are seated, crowded together, talking with tragic expressions of face, several women who are awaiting the result of a case; among them two with their babies in their arms; Neapolitans of the country, stout-waisted in their red corsets, with brown faces, the eye hard and a little wild-looking. Perhaps they are relatives of this Palmieri whose case is now called out. It takes so little to bring a

black cloud into these southern eyes! Palmieri comes before the Tenth Correctional Chamber. He is accused of having interfered with the Government by establishing a clandestine lottery—an offence which is very common in this part of the country—and having thus obtained 35 lire [\$7]. The hall, formerly an office in the vice-regal palace, is filled with an audience evidently friendly to the accused; they reluctantly make way for the passage of the officer, and do not completely obey his reiterated calls for "Silence!" The unlucky prosecuting officer vainly calls for his witnesses. Two out of three are not present. He goes to the door opening into the great hall, and over the crowd, the moving human mass, he again cries out the names at the top of his voice. There is no reply, and he comes back shrugging his shoulders, as if to say, "One more non-appearance!" The judge is not surprised. He knows his Neapolitans well; they are most unwilling to testify against an unlucky neighbour; leaning forward over his desk, his hair streaming backward under his velvet cap, which is as flat as a beretta, he does no more than glance at his colleague on the right, and then at his colleague on the left. The two assistants, dressed like the presiding judge, in black robes with a silver knot on the shoulder, seem to reply "Amen" with their tight-shut lips.

Then the accused is allowed to speak—a slim, stylish young fellow, in a short brown coat, who

comes forward almost to the judges' seat, and begins to defend himself without the least emotion. You would think him a lawyer with ten years' experience and pleading another man's case, so well pitched is his voice, so fluent his language, so happy his gestures. He stops a moment between his sentences, and from time to time he turns round as if to derive an argument from the non-appearance of the witnesses for the prosecution.

I leave him to finish, and make my way through the different courtrooms, where there is the same crowd, the same informality, and manifestly the same familiarity between the judges on the one hand and the advocates, witnesses, and lookers-on on the other. Many of these halls of justice are filled with people talking idly together as in any public room.

"We used to have here in Naples a brother lawyer," said my companion, as we went downstairs together, "who gained many cases, not by any talent that he had, but because he was known to be a *jettatore*."

"It is still believed in, then, this *jettatura*?"

"More than is generally admitted. In one of the courtrooms that you have just visited not long ago there occurred an amusing thing. The advocate of whom I speak, who had the evil eye, was dreaded by all his brethren of the profession, but especially by one of the civil judges. On one occasion, as the *jettatore* was preparing for an im-

portant case, the lawyer on the other side suddenly died. There was a very distressing impression produced by this event. 'Did you know,' people said to each other, 'that So-and-so had accepted a case against the *jettatore*, and now he is dead.'

"Someone was at last found to take the vacant place. The case was again appointed for a certain day. Before the day arrived, by bad luck, again the opponent of the *jettatore* died, this time by an accident. There was a panic. Not a person was willing to take the case; and a third lawyer, appointed by the court, stayed away when the day came. The judge was alone in the presence of the *jettatore*, and he was the more dismayed because he had prepared his decision in advance, and it was unfavourable to this formidable person. As he sat down in his judicial armchair, he unconsciously had pushed his spectacles up over his forehead. 'I am blind!' he cried in terror. 'Pardon me, So-and-so; I have done you no injury!' And, at the moment, his glasses dropping back into their place: 'Oh, I beg your pardon, my friend!' he hastened to say, 'I have got my sight again.' This story, in the legal world of Naples, provoked a long and loud burst of laughter. But the *jettatore* was only the more dreaded. At last he fell ill, and everybody prayed for his death. And when it was represented to people what a wrong thing it was to wish one's neighbour dead, they said: 'Oh, he is not a man at all; he is a *jettatore*.'"

“ And how does this begin? In what way is the evil eye first recognized? ”

“ By its effects, which are infinitely varied, but always harmful. For instance, at a reception a guest enters, and at the same moment another, who is taking tea, drops his cup and it is broken. This coincidence is observed. Later in the evening the same gentleman, hearing someone say that such a person was dead, cries thoughtlessly: ‘ Why, that can’t be! I was with him this very morning! ’ You may well suppose that from this time onward prudent people will begin to avoid a man who passes his morning with someone who is dead before night, and that a few more such things will make a very black reputation.”

“ And an indelible one? ”

“ Oh, certainly! Once a *jettatore*, always a *jettatore*. The years in no way impair the malignity of his eye. Nor is this superstition a privilege peculiar to Naples. You will meet it everywhere in Italy. I know a man of the highest fashion, a member of one of the first clubs in Rome; when it is understood that he is to breakfast at the club, the dining room has rarely any other guest than himself. Members who have given in their names for the meal prefer to pay twice for their breakfast, and go to a restaurant rather than have it in such a dangerous neighbourhood. I might name a lady of the same social rank, who, at court balls, generally remains alone on her bench, unless

the foreign colonies are largely represented. In that case, some Englishwoman or some German will take a seat beside the *jettatrice*, not knowing the story, and the isolation is for the moment relieved. But I confess that at Naples the Southern temperament brings stories of this kind to a higher pitch of the comic. I could tell you many instances. Here is one that happened to the Conte di C., who died the other day. Everybody feared him, just as now, here in Naples, everybody fears the person who is spoken of as 'the *innomabile*' and 'the *formidabile*'; but nothing equalled the terror of the Duke de M., whenever he found himself in the presence of his cousin. The evil eye was so strong in the Conte di C. that coral horns, ostensibly worn as a watch charm, or the hand upon a key—powerful means of defence in general—could not prevent disasters from falling thick as hail on people who came near him. It is impossible always to avoid a person, however; and one day, on the sidewalk, coming around a corner, the duke met his cousin face to face. '*Come sta?*' cried the count. 'Take my arm, cousin; I was just going to your house.' The other turned pale, but there was no escape. Did he grow suddenly faint, or did he slip on a bit of melon-peel? This has never been known; but, at the end of one street, the duke in some way fell, and he broke his leg. Then his Neapolitan prudence got the upper hand, and, injured as he was,

he had the strength to whisper in his formidable cousin's ear this pretty patois sentence: '*Grazie, perchè tu me putire accidere, e te si cuntentate de m'arruinare!*'—'Thanks! You might have killed me, and you have only broken my leg!'

It may be said that in literature there is a Neapolitan school, or at least a South Italian school, in which Naples holds the chief place. She has always had her singers of Piedigrotta, the merry band who annually compose, for the great *festa*, the popular songs on which the townspeople will live for the coming year.

The compositions accepted for this occasion are not all of equal merit; many die and are forgotten, having had but one edition, at ten centesimi, sold at the street corners. But I feel that these poets keep up the tradition, and that to their verses we owe the novels so popular and so original, with so much local colour, to which I have already alluded. The literary public of France is always ready to welcome and enjoy works like those of Signora Mathilda Serrao, in which there is much life, much love for the humble Neapolitans, and a knowledge so accurate, so far as a stranger can judge, of their manners and ways of thought and speech. The *Paese di Cuccagna*, the last novel of hers with which I am familiar, dealing with that great passion of the community, that source of so many dramas, the lottery, better explains the Nea-

politan temperament and gives more information as to local customs than could very frequent visits to the fine hotels of the Chiaja. The same is true of Salvatore di Giacomo, whose *Mattinate napoletane* have had a very legitimate success. These are short stories, written in this sad under-world of Naples, by a clever author: *Valite o Vassilo?* a sick child whose mother, a poor woman, has had his portrait painted, and the subsequent event of his death; *Serafina*, a scene in a hospital; a girl wounded with five stabs is undergoing an operation upstairs, while her poor old father at the gate is telling the porter how she fled, shamefully, one night from her home; *l'Abbandonato*, the baby with only his grandmother, who, about to die alone in a cellar of the *fondachi* that I have described, lays him, sound asleep, on the upper step of the stairs, that her poor comrades may see him when they return; the charming story of the two friends, *The Canary and the Dove*; and especially that admirable little drama, *Senza vederlo*, in which a widow, Carmela, goes to ask from the Secretary of the Albergo dei Poveri the favour of seeing her child, and to whom no one is willing to acknowledge that he is dead and forgotten. It is incredible how much emotion, how much human pity the author has been able to embody in these twelve stories in a duodecimo volume.<sup>1</sup> Verga, another

<sup>1</sup> Among other works of his may be mentioned *Rosa Bellavita*, and a dialect poem 'O *Munastero*.



Neapolitan author, lacks this very elegant conciseness. His style has, however, a Sicilian colour, very marked, perhaps even extravagant at times. Many of his *novelle*, especially the first, *Nedda*, and his *Vita dei Campe*, are beautiful, heartrending tales of Sicilian poverty.

And the sum of all this reading, the impression made by these books, is that the reputation for mad revelry which Naples has is, in part, unfounded; instead of the legendary boatman, picturesque of costume, tuneful of voice, there is a pathetic figure who suffers and weeps. The charm of this verse or prose which tells the story of common life arises, therefore, from a pity, very deep at heart, but almost always veiled in expression, and from the precious faculty of thinking and speaking in the language of the poor.

#### IN CALABRIA.

It was my desire to revisit Ætna; and being familiar with the sea-route, I decided to go by land. We pass through Salerno, then cross the mountains to Metaponto on the Bay of Taranto, and from there, turning at right angles, follow the Calabrian coast down to the tip of the boot at Reggio. There is but one train a day, and it is a journey of twenty hours. We leave Naples at 2.10 P. M., reaching the Straits of Messina the next morning at about ten o'clock. The journey is fatiguing, with long stops during the night among

the mountains; and this railway, which has cost enormously,—600,000,000 [\$120,000,000], it is asserted,—will be of very little value when the new road from Naples to Reggio is completed. This line leaves the old route below Salerno, and coasts the Mediterranean almost all the way. The saving of time will be very important. Steamers crossing the Straits connect with the trains, and the point for the new line of connection will probably be no longer Reggio, but Villa San Giovanni. It is said, even, that the train itself will be sent across on barges, and go on from Messina by a route, also new, following the north shore of the island, and shortening by a third the distance from Messina to Palermo.

The Italians of the southern provinces are glad to talk of these schemes as of a tardy favour granted to the South, and they tell you, also, that these are not the only public works going on in this long-neglected region; an immense arsenal is nearly completed at Taranto, and there is a plan for carrying the waters of the river Sele into Apulia. This is, by the way, an interesting scheme. The provinces of Foggia and Bari, with the port of Barletta, the principal market for Italian wines, are almost destitute of running water. Agriculture suffers from this, and especially the public health, for the inhabitants have only cistern water to drink; and this, in the summer, the stagnant residue of earlier rains, is sold at

an unreasonable price. An Italian engineer, Signor Zampani, proposes to take at Caposele a part of the water which now flows to the Mediterranean, and constructing an aqueduct—a grander work, perhaps, than the Roman aqueducts—and tunnelling the Apennines for over a mile, carry it across to the valley of Ofanto on the Adriatic slope, whence, by many secondary channels, it can be distributed to the large number of cities and villages that require it. The estimated expense would exceed 100,000,000 [\$20,000,000], and it is hoped to enlist English capital in the enterprise. Obstacles of all kinds are in the way, and the project is as yet only a dream, but of the boldest kind and well adapted to excite public interest.

I return to my railway journey. On such a long route one is fortunate if he finds agreeable company. We hesitated a while, then selected a compartment where three persons were already seated—one with harsh but intelligent face, black, drooping moustache, and travel-stained garments, seemingly a man from some remote country; the second, a jovial rotund face, with gray moustache *à la* Victor Emanuel, the hair almost white and very thick, a big coral pin in the scarf, at the watch-chain a horn against the evil eye, the type of a soldier, the father of a family, and the father of his men; the third, a gentleman extremely elegant, very young, dark, long-faced, and carrying, in the

upper pocket of his waistcoat, a pencil attached to a fine gold chain.

At first we are almost silent; we look occasionally at the landscape. It is delicious near Vesuvius, as everybody knows. The valley, even beyond Pompeii, where we lose sight of the Bay, is extremely fertile, and I admire the luxuriant bean-fields quite as much as the blue distance; then there are low hills between which we pass, then we arrive at Salerno, so surprising, so royally beautiful, as we emerge from a tunnel—this view of the city lying in a semicircle at the foot of a huge slope, with its white houses, its red roofs, its harbour and jetties, the flank of the promontory through which the tunnel is cut and over which lies the zigzag road to Amalfi, and last, the sea, without a wrinkle, misty with excess of light, its horizon effaced by the sunset. After this the road rises again, leaving the grassy plain where Pæstum was, and we enter the mountain country. At the little stations the men who are waiting for the train often wear the Calabrian cap, and the women have the short red petticoat, the warm pallor, and the long eyes of the Orient. Many carry their children wrapped and tied up in coloured cloths; at Eboli I counted three of these little blue packages and two yellow ones. There are for sale buffalo-cheeses, round and varnished like colocynths, and oranges with their leaves. And so evening comes on.

We had not waited so long as this before making some acquaintance with two of our travelling companions. The slender young man is a landowner in the Basilicate; the older man with the Victor Emanuel moustache is an infantry officer on his way to Taranto; the third traveller remains silent and motionless in his corner.

Between the major and the landowner conversation soon began upon the condition of things in Southern Italy. Both, in their several ways, deplored the present situation in the Basilicate and in Calabria.

"You see," the major remarked, "everywhere land lying fallow, hill-slopes channelled out by the rains."

And, in fact, we did see nothing but hills, and in the last gleams of daylight, their tops almost always stony, and without a trace of cultivated fields or plantations of trees.

"The fault is in the deplorable management of our forests," said the civilian. "For a very long time the peasants have been allowed to cut down the trees and shrubs at will. They have destroyed without restoring. The belt of trees has been progressively narrowed on many of the mountains, and finally has disappeared. Then the earth has been washed away, undermined by rains. Now we have a law, within the past four years, which provides for replanting. But it comes somewhat late!"

"There are many other causes, signor. Here are great extents of country, which might be cultivated and populous, *ridenti di persone*. But to whom do they belong? You know better than I do; two-thirds of Calabria is in the hands of a score of barons——"

"And so it should be! They have bought it, or they have inherited it."

"I don't say they have not. The result is no less deplorable. Most of these are contented to let their flocks roam over these *tenute*. The land not being heavily taxed, since it is considered to be of a very poor kind, their revenue is enough. I am ready to admit that they are excusable in letting a state of things go on which they did not themselves create. You will agree, however, that the condition of the labouring classes is pitiable in the extreme."

"Certainly it is."

"Wages of 1.25 [25 cents], sometimes as little as 85 centesimi [17 cents], for thirteen hours of labour; boiled herbs and black bread for food;<sup>1</sup> if they desire to become farmers, and try for a little prosperity, usury dogs them, and will have five per cent., or ten, by the week. Then what do they do? They emigrate."

"Yes, they emigrate, Signor Major; but I

<sup>1</sup> These figures are also given in the pamphlet of F. Nitti, *Emigrazione italiana e i suoi avversarii*. Naples, Roux.

doubt if they do much better elsewhere. Emigration is an Italian scourge."

A clear, distinct voice at this point interrupted:  
"It is a wealth!"

In his corner, half lighted by the little lamp in the ceiling, the third traveller was leaning forward, and looking at his two neighbours with that harsh expression, without any glimmer of a conventional smile, without the least conciliation toward one's adversary, which marks the man of the lower classes. Nevertheless, he was dressed like a well-to-do townsman.

The young man bent toward him politely, so far as to bring his head under the carriage lamp, which made a halo for his hair.

"I do not understand you," he said—"a wealth? You maintain that when, for example, in 1886, Italy lost more than eighty thousand of her inhabitants to America alone, she was enriched by it?"

"Yes; we had an excess of population at home. If we use it in colonizing, and so Italianize a part of America, what objection is there to that? It at least makes us more influential. Many of our people are doing well in the Argentine Republic, in Brazil, and elsewhere. They gain their living, as I know myself!"

"Have you become an American?"

"I have; for the last three years I have been the manager of an estate in Buenos Ayres; and I am here now to take my family out."

"You had left them here?"

"Yes; the journey was expensive."

"And when you have made your fortune, you propose to come back some day?"

The emigrant remained silent for a moment; then, no doubt, he decided that he was American enough already to tell the whole story:

"I think not," he said.

"Very well! For my part," rejoined the young man, throwing himself back in his corner disdainfully, "if I were the Government, I should prohibit emigration by every means in my power; I should lay a tax upon the emigrant. You will never make me believe that it is well to depopulate one country in the interest of another. I know villages in Calabria which have lost in certain years a hundred inhabitants."

The emigrant was displeased. His eyes glittered; he shrugged his shoulders.

"It is a harm to Calabria," he said; "but it is good for Italy. Besides, I had tried to gain a living here in this country; and there was none to be gained."

He drew back into his corner as if decided to say no more; and, shortly after, he alighted on the deserted platform of a station swept by the icy wind which blew from out a ravine. My thought followed him in the darkness on his way to one of those hill-tops which we had observed from point to point, crowned with houses bound to-



gether and crowded close by ruinous old ramparts. Possibly he could not reach home till nearly daylight, making long circuits caused by the torrent which roared at the right. Perhaps the village was one of those whose inhabitants I had seen dancing the tarantella so gravely in their fine costumes of the olden time! I seemed to see him entering the bedroom, still darkened, where the cribs had not yet begun to cry out, and the joy, mingled with alarm, of the wife, to whom this announced definitive exile!

The commandant, whose urbanity and tranquillity this sharp collision between the landowner and the emigrant seemed to have discomposed, began to explain to me that emigration was in fact much more frequent in the South than in the North. Among other interesting things, he told me that the peasants of the North generally went accompanied by their families, expecting in some way to get back again, if America proved inhospitable; while the *bracciani* of Calabria and the Basilicate were accustomed to go alone, to spend two or three years in studying the situation and finding means for a livelihood; and then returning, as our late neighbour had done, with money enough to bring out the wife, the children, and the old people.

By degrees the major also grew animated. He spoke to me—he, a Piedmontese—about this extreme southern part of Italy, where he felt himself

out of his element, humiliated in his patriotic pride about so many things. He got up, and stood before me as if making a speech, fulminating against the luxurious and idle townspeople of Potenza, Metaponto, Catanzaro, and other little places of local importance.

"The young men who could do so much for the country," he said, "do nothing. When they have finished their studies, they come home. Is it to improve the condition of the region in which they live, or even their own? Not at all. Two thousand lire [\$400] of income suffices them. This permits them to act the noble, *fare il nobile*, to salute and to be saluted. They see nothing beyond. Up to the age of twenty-five you will see them on all the promenades. Later they will be sitting in chairs in their orange groves, and watching their labourers dig. My country! I am ashamed for her!"

He went on for a few minutes in this tone, his eyebrows frowning, his voice vibrating with emotion. The country, liberty, democracy, the young nation, greatness, future—all these impressive words he grouped in sentences; and when he felt that he had effaced the impression produced upon us by the detail of the miseries of Southern Italy, he appeared satisfied, sat down, presently confessed to me that his wife bought her things in Paris, at the Printemps; then fell asleep.

This did not last long. Ten minutes later the train, much shaken, and letting off steam on the down grades, ran into the station at Metaponto. The light of lanterns flashed over faces, each framed in its corner. Someone opened the door and came in, a young lieutenant of artillery in uniform. He knocked against the major's legs, which were stretched across to the opposite cushion. The excellent man awoke. In such a case a Frenchman would have grumbled and given way; an Englishman would not have stirred. The Italian smiled at the newcomer, withdrew his legs, and said courteously, "*S'accomodi, s'accomodi!*" Then, perceiving that this was the station where he was to leave the train, he grasped my hand in farewell, recommending to me the marvellous (*stupendo*) bouillon that, by chance, was to be had at this Calabrian buffet. The landowner with the gold chain also got off here.

The route now lay close by the sea. The mountains which we had traversed, heaped up at the right, had the same desolate look. They formed a near horizon of slopes, rocky or covered with meagre thickets. The space, varying in breadth from their foot to the line of the railway, presented but rarely a little fresh verdure—clusters of reeds along a *fiumara*, whose soil preserved a little moisture. More frequently it was an abandoned pasture, with black tufts of boxwood here and there, or else fields of pale green olive trees planted

in rows. No sign of culture, and almost no flocks. Dawn came on, and at the left lay the sea—a sea without islands and as smooth as glass. If it had the least tide, how quickly it would have covered the brown sand over which we ran! Vessels, infrequent like the flocks, slept upon the water. After sunrise, they seemed to float upon molten metal. But the land received no lustre from the sunlight, and remained infinitely sad.

For nearly two hundred miles the coast is the same. I regretted the major's departure, and even that of the other two. The young lieutenant had less character and less erudition, but, like most Italian officers, was perfectly courteous. When the train stopped at the stations, with a row of houses on one side and a row of fishing boats on the other, he mentioned the name of the place; and he asked me to observe that the Calabrian villages were "beginning to come down."

In earlier days they were all perched upon heights, fortified, crenellated, like those we had noticed here and there among the Apennines. The coasts were not secure. The long tradition of invasion by people from every land, and the more recent dangers from Calabrian brigands, also the fear of malaria on the low ground, had grouped the inhabitants on defensible hill-tops, and above the dangerous atmosphere of the plains. Now all new buildings are close to the sea, and the ram-

parts on the hills are falling into ruins. As regards malaria, it is neither more nor less than formerly. It depends on the exposure, the nature of the soil, the direction of the prevailing winds, and on many other unknown causes not easily to be avoided.

It must be confessed that even this thin current of talk sufficed to develop a friendly feeling. When we parted on the quay at Reggio, the young officer to take the steamer and go over into Sicily; I to go in search, in the upper part of the town, of the fortunate proprietor of a bergamot orchard, I felt sincere regret at parting from the stranger.

"Look at me!" he said.

"I am looking."

"To think that, officially, we are enemies!"

"And obliged to fight each other."

"No," he rejoined quickly. "It will not last, the *triplice*. We are so naturally on your side! Come and see me at X. You will find that many of my comrades think as I do. We may be ever so loyal, but we have a right to our *wishes*. Don't you think so?"

He stepped across the little gangway to the steamer. We again saluted, and I have never seen him since.

#### THE BERGAMOT.

Here I am, then, in search of Signor Guglielmo, or Antonio, or Francesco—no matter what his

name is—the owner of the fine orchard. This time I will not pass through Reggio without making acquaintance with the bergamot. Our fathers and mothers loved it. It is still used. And it grows here exclusively, on a narrow strip of ground which begins at Villa San Giovanni above Reggio, ending a little below the town at Palizzi. The attempt has been made to acclimatize it across the Straits in Sicily, but it loses its perfume there. The fruit requires this hot-house climate, this exposure on a gentle slope, this earth, the result of landslides.

I find Signor Guglielmo a stout man with small sleepy eyes that shine for an instant like flash-lights when he talks of business. He really worships the bergamot. This is all that I require of him; he understands his business. If he shows cleverness besides, that is thrown in. And it seems he does. We leave the city in a pelting rain. I ask him if it will last. He looks over toward Sicily whence the wind comes:

*“Cosa di niente,”* he says, *“tempo di Sicila, tempo femmineo, che non dura.”* “This is nothing, Sicilian weather, woman’s weather, that does not last.”

Over the walls of the orchards which line the roads very far out into the country, as at Palermo, the varnished leaves of the trees shade hundreds of yellow oranges. The rain, wetting the trees, evaporates in the sunshine and perfumes the air. At a rapid trot we pass through this fragrant

suburb. The inclosures become more infrequent and also the houses. Fields of beans appear on both sides of the road, and others of pimento, lifting up their red pods, which resemble poppies.

Signor Guglielmo sniffs the air noisily.

"Bergamot!" he says.

And there, indeed, a hundred yards in front of us, peasants in the Calabrian dress, the men with short trousers, the women with red petticoats and the great drooping head-dress, are escorting a cart loaded with the precious fruit on its way to a mill. The cart leaves behind it a perfume so strong that it completely overpowers that of the oranges and lemons. We are in a bergamot-steam. My host seems enraptured. I look into the baskets. They are filled with green fruit, of the size of a Valencia orange, but with a smooth rind, and endowed on the top with a little appendix, as if the stem passed through and came out on the other side.

The rain has ceased and the hills, whose first slopes we begin to ascend, resume their bluish tints. A half mile farther, and in the beautiful, moist, warm country of Reggio, facing one of the broadest landscapes in the world, we stop at the gate of a villa. Very different is this from even a Marseillaise *bastide*! A hedge of red geraniums, luxuriant, growing up into great shrubs, surrounds the house, which is tinted pink and covered halfway up the walls with climbing jasmine. Between the walls and the geranium hedge, like a

greenhouse, like a portico, an arbour covered with vines makes a shade from the noonday sun; it bends around the eastern façade of the house and brings the visitor to the entrance.

The interior entirely fails to correspond with the grace outside. I have often been surprised at the indifference to comfort manifested by the middle-class Italians. The proprietor of this villa is a rich man, but there is scarcely any furniture in his house; the beds—oh, Normandy, land of eider-downs!—are composed of a very small mattress and a minute straw-bed between iron uprights; and the frames which hang against the cracked plaster of the walls have in them nothing but chromo-lithographs, suggestive of a village tavern. Let us go to the orchard!

It is an enchanting spot. Emerging from under the vine arbour, we enter a grove of oranges, mandarins, and bergamots, very high, very luxuriant, meeting above our heads, and having beneath their arches a shadow that is scarcely flecked, here and there, with a ray of sunlight. A little further on there is a great square inclosure entirely filled with bergamots; and along one avenue there are shrubs with oval leaves, and fruit like a soft, green pine-cone.

"I was thinking you might not know that," Signor Guglielmo said.

"What do you call it?"

"It is the *annona*, also a specialty of Reggio,



and impossible to export. The pulp is too tender, but so nice! Try it!"

He took from his coat pocket a little spoon, plunged it into one of the largest, and drew out a long morsel of creamy pulp, yellow white, at the end of which was a black seed, extremely hard. My companion found the *annona* insipid; to me it had a delicious flavour of vanilla. But I was a little intoxicated by the odour of all these geraniums and perfumer's plants. I no longer dare persevere in my opinion of the *annona*.

We came back in the direction of the essence factory, a very modest structure, a few steps from the house and on the edge of a second grove of plum trees. The work was all carried on in the same hall, in the different corners. At the right, near the door, kneeling in the centre of a wooden frame that lay on the ground filled with bergamots, Ciccia, the little Sicilian girl, was sorting the fruits. Her yellow kerchief and Arab head rose prettily above the green pyramids. She selected five bergamots of equal size and passed them to her father, who placed them in the receiver of a machine. A few turns of a crank and the work was done. The five came out apparently intact, but invisible cuts had expressed the essence from the rind. The fruit itself had no more value as perfume. It was thrown to another man who, with a machine, quartered it, and these pieces, in a press at the opposite end of the hall, gave an

abundant liquid, loaded with citric acid. Then, that nothing might be wasted, the residue, in a heap, was carried away to be fed to the cows, sheep, and goats.

I inquire what is the profit from a bergamot grove. Signor Guglielmo tells me that the culture of this precious tree is quite expensive, each one requiring, like an orange tree, to be watered at least once a week; but, on the whole, that a quarter acre well planted with trees of good size will give about 8 kilos of essence, at 25 lire the kilo. His domain gives not less than 800 or 1000 kilos in good years [25 lire the kilo equals, approximately, \$2.25 the pound].

"But," he says, and I detect in the tone of his voice his sincere pity for us, "you do not know true bergamot in Paris. Even here many dealers adulterate it by adding other essences, such as the essence of terebinth."

I, myself, was more touched by the condition of the labourers whom Signor Guglielmo and other Calabrians employ in their factories. These men, whom I have just seen, go to bed at five in the afternoon, immediately after their supper. At ten o'clock they rise, and they work all night—"because they will be less distracted from their work in the night," says my host—then, all the morning, and in the afternoon up to three o'clock. For this prodigious day they get 1.25 [25 cents]. As for their food—and they have neither meat nor

wine—their breakfast menu may give an idea of it: two pepperpods dipped in oil and a piece of black bread!

“Now you understand,” philosophically remarks the proprietor of the bergamot grove, “why emigration is so common in this part of the country.”

In company with him we visit the upper part of the domain. Soon, at the limit of the irrigating channels, the grove of plum trees ends. The ground, stony, glowing with heat, burnt by the sun, can only produce vines—which are at this time suffering from the phylloxera—and stunted fig trees spreading out their leaves near the ground. As we go higher, vegetation becomes more impoverished. A dried-up torrent, like a dusty road, seems to mark the limit of the terrestrial paradise of Reggio. Beyond, there are only uneven the slopes covered with cactus, and then the great mountain peaks of Calabria.

## IV.

### A CORNER OF SICILY—ÆTNA IN ERUPTION.

I WAS desirous to set foot again upon this land of Sicily, whence, two years earlier, I had brought away memories so precious; and, especially, I was eager to revisit Ætna, whose eruption still continued. It had begun in July. It was thought to be ending, and many a time had I pictured to myself the spectacle of glowing lavas on the huge slopes, in the region where the rocks were strewn with ferns or in that, lower down, of the chestnut woods. From Reggio by night I had sought to discover a spark upon the mountain's side; but from the mainland nothing could be seen. I crossed over to Messina and took the train for Aci-Reale.

It is very pleasant to return to roads like these, whose beauty seems to be changeless, scarcely dependent upon the seasons. I had been here before in summer, and it was now the middle of winter. But there was very little change. We passed freight trains loaded with lemons in boxes, or even the fruit heaped up, open to the air, like the apples of Normandy. The mountains on the right had

no more lost the verdure of their olive trees and cactuses than the wonderful outline of their fret-work crests, with here and there an old Saracenic fort. Their *fiumare* had scarcely more water than in the month of August. On the left I recognized the precipitous slopes, planted with vineyards and groves of plum trees, the villas of the citizens of Messina who are lovers of orchards, the capes with their deep-blue shadows on the sea, and the fishing-boats drawn up on the water's edge. I even felt the same surprise as before on passing from the Italian country into this half African island, on seeing the bronzed faces of the lower classes, the thick lip and the piercing glance. I heard again the same kind of talk as before: "Nothing new, then, from Castrogiovanni, since the leader of the Marini was killed?"

"No."

"That was a long time ago. And how is it with you?"

"Not the slightest accident; complete security. Is it because Rinaldi's men have been captured?"

"No, it is a pity; *è gran peccato*." I had especially extolled to my companion the charms of this little city of Aci-Reale, all white, at the foot of Ætna, with its belt of orange trees. But clouds had gathered, and the rain began to fall. When I wished to demonstrate, on the spot, the reasons for my ardour, I found not one left. The streets were filthy, narrow, tangled up; Ætna was hid-

den; the orange trees, all black, wept over our heads; the dealers in fruit and vegetables, those jewellers of Italy, had taken in their brilliant stock in trade, even to the wreaths of tomatoes; the leaden sea beat upon a gray shore. And I became conscious that there were times when even Sicily did not do itself justice.

The rain continued; darkness coming on was making still more gloomy the road and the white sea and the gardens of the baths of Santa Venera, which were visible from the hotel where we had taken shelter, when we heard a dull, prolonged sound which made the windows rattle. "A ship is leaving the port of Catana," a servant said. "She has a big gun, and the wind brings the sound to Aci." But half an hour later my friend, who had stepped out upon the balcony, called to me: "Ætna is flaming! This is magnificent!" And, indeed, the storm, dividing and passing off, left Ætna visible. The moon cast a faint light on the snow-covered summit and the formidable declivities of the mountain. At two-thirds of its height, and seeming still higher in this vista of the sky, a fiery trail was winding down, and three craters, perfectly distinct, emitted flames. The sky was reddened above them. The highest, or at least that which seemed so from our point of view, threw up sheaves of incandescent stones, like a comet's tail, and we could see them fall back, not upon lower ground, but higher up the mountain.

The report of a gun which we had heard was this crater, formed very early in the eruption, resuming its activity.

I whispered my thanks to the mountain, and went indoors to arrange for an ascent on the morrow, with a return during the night. The landlord was smoking under the broad, open vestibule. Groups—for the sake of international politeness, let us say—of ragged dreamers hung around the gate.

“*Voici*, Don Abbondio. I have come to apply to you; I want to start to-morrow at one o’clock.”

And at this point five or six from these groups drew near. There is so little news at Aci-Reale! It is so pleasant to catch three words from a stranger, or from a neighbour, and supply the rest, in those little conventicles men hold in the square, during the hours when they live *à la grecque*, in the open air. I endeavoured to escape them. They followed us, with much politeness, however. And I saw that the innkeeper had some precautions to employ. It was publicly agreed that we should leave the hotel at a given hour, and by a given route; also that we should leave on the return at about such an hour. “Nevertheless,” said the innkeeper to me in a low voice, “do not come back by night to sleep here.”

“Why not?” I said. “The roads are safe?”

“Oh, perfectly safe! But you would do better to sleep at Nicolosi.” And he got out of it with-

out explanation, using that Southern phrase, which says nothing, and expresses everything: "Can one ever know when things are right?"

If I had not been familiar with Sicily, this might have caused me alarm. I am convinced that a stranger can go down any hour of the night from the crater of Ætna to the shore, and incur no danger. But the Sicilians have such an inveterate habit of being jealous of each other, and they show this so frequently in their conduct, that they are in great part responsible for the unfortunate and unmerited reputation of their island.

The following day, about one o'clock in the afternoon, we set off from Nicolosi, where we had been resting for several hours; the shrewd old inn-keeper of the dismal little village, Mazzaglia, *corrispondente del clubo alpino italiano, sezione Catania*, having procured the two mules that we needed. I had asked for my former guide, Carbonaro, but he was sowing his barley, visitors being rare at this late time of year, and one of his comrades came instead.

The day was extremely clear. On the many extinct craters, sons of Ætna, which covered the mountain's sides, the yellow broom, all in flower, shone in the sunlight. On each side of the stony road the last red leaves were hanging on the cherry trees, and the last yellowed leaves on the vines. Troops of women and children, coming down from the belt of forests, loaded with bags of chestnuts,



met us and passed by with the *buona sera!* so pleasant to hear.

Above the cone, up there in the sky, over the prodigious chimney whose aperture was ten thousand feet in circumference, the great cloud of white smoke, rolled up at the edges, rose heavily, as usual, and soon fell again, its point toward Calabria. A faint quiver in the atmosphere, and a gray vapour, very slight and vanishing very rapidly, revealed that the volcano was still in eruption, and that lava was flowing at the foot of the Montagnola, in the arid region, where the snows cease.

Soon after leaving behind us the last houses of Nicolosi, we had come to a first stream of cooled lava. It had partly spread itself over older lavas, and formed with them a kind of gigantic embankment, throwing out secondary branches all along its course. The vineyards which this current had crossed seemed dead. However, the Italian treasury has already been at work here. Amid the general misfortunes, the Government endeavoured not to lose more than was inevitable, and a few months after the beginning of the eruption a list was prepared of the lands which had escaped. Its white marks punctuated the torrent now forever fixed and hard; nothing had been forgotten, not even a half-acre lot enveloped on every side by the fire.

"A shame!" my guide said. "Owners who had the best land on the mountain! Here they are,

ruined; and the Government hastened to lay its tax on bits of ground wherever there were left so much as a couple of dozen half-burnt vines and one scorched olive tree!"

The man was intelligent. He had been an eyewitness of the drama of the eruption, and related it to me as we climbed the mountain.

"It was lucky," he said, "that the lavas followed the route which earlier ones had made, for no person living has ever seen so much lava thrown out as in this eruption. It destroyed the Stags' Wood and its beautiful farm. Chestnuts and vines and olive trees that you could not help coveting, signor, when you saw them. The lava was deep enough to bury ten times as much. We were expecting the eruption, I and my comrades. As long ago as June there were days without smoke, which is a bad sign; and others with a great deal and with ashes. Then, early in July, Contarini, one of the guides, came back from the *Casa inglese* with travellers whose clothes had been completely discoloured by the vapours that came out of the ground. It was on the 9th that the mountain burst open, between the Montagnola and Monte Nero, with a sound like a discharge of hundreds of cannon, and earthquakes and jets of smoke. By evening the new craters could be seen from Catania, and the lava coming down in two streams like a horse-shoe, and very rapidly. I went close up to see it many times, with travellers, who found

it very curious; though it was a sad sight, I assure you.

“Once, in particular, one of the first nights after the eruption, we came to a stream of lava several hundred yards broad, and higher than the chestnut trees in the region through which it was flowing. It moved very slowly, except some red-hot blocks on top, which now and then broke away from it, and rushed through the woods. But the trees were a pitiable sight. From a distance they began to quiver; their leaves shook violently, dried up in a few minutes, and then blazed up all at once. Frequently the trunk did not burn, but fell into the torrent. Nights after that I used often to look up from Catania to the point on the mountain where I had been. Often I could see on the red belt of the torrent thousands of little white flames blazing up for a few minutes and then dying out. The beautiful chestnut trees, signor, that you will never see here again!”<sup>1</sup>

We kept on, however, under the branches, and I remembered the thin, scattered brushwood and crests of woodland, whose moss had certainly never felt the touch of fire. Not until about five o'clock, at a mile and a quarter beyond the Casa del Bosco,

<sup>1</sup> Many details of my guide's story were also given in the narrative addressed to me by the learned and obliging professor of the university of Catania, Signor Bartoli, who passes a part of his summer at the *Casa inglese*. See *Sull' eruzione dell' Etna*, etc., Torino; tip. San Giuseppe.

did we reach the new frontier that the eruption had just made to the forests of *Ætna*. In front and above us the open space, filled with ferns and circular tufts of *astragal*; higher up still, the snow, held in place by the wall of the *Montagnola*; and, lastly, dominating its innumerable sons, the great broad crater softly outlined against the bright sky. But at the right, not far distant, where two years before I had admired the russet tints of the undergrowth and of the trees, a wall of lava rears itself. The mules make their way in between the heaped-up blocks, and reach the summit of the first wave of stone. Thence is visible the saddest and most arid landscape the mind can imagine—a succession of monstrous furrows of dead lava, black as peat lands, bristling with clods that seem unstable in their balance, with twisted spires, with projecting roofs forming caves beneath them. We discover no other thing, so far as the eye can see in that direction. The stream buried the woods and the pasture lands, and completely mastered the slope up to the point where it dips rapidly and disappears. We advance very slowly, crevasses sending up hot puffs into our faces. In the little valleys the heat is smothering, and only the cold outer air, scourging our faces when we come out on the crest of the slope, recalls to us that we are nearly seven thousand feet above the level of the sea, on a winter's afternoon.

The sun is already very low as we begin the

ascent of Monte Nero, a former cone of eruption, which the lava of 1892 completely covered. The ascent is very steep, and thickly overgrown with weeds. We fasten our mules rather insecurely behind the shelter of a rock, and look about us. The active craters of the present eruption are very near. On the side of Ætna, which rises on the left, three of these, all within two hundred yards of us, smoke and hiss, and send up sand and small stones. Their edges are spotted with sulphur.

At their base jets of vapour issue from the ground. The activity of the volcano is much diminished, and the spectacle is not frightful, at least by day. That which is really alarming is to look off over the second desert of lava, like that which we have just crossed, whose limits are lost in the mists of twilight in the remote distance, and to remember that part of this lava is still hot and fluid. What part of it? That we cannot tell. The whole is uniformly of the same blackish colour with that of the cold lava back of us. Rapidly we descend, preceded by the guide, to traverse on foot these enormous plains under which the stone is perhaps soft with heat. Often we make a circuit after testing with the hand the surface of some heap.

Around, the light decreases. We are in the midst of chaos, climbing ridges and descending, without any marked track. Suddenly I perceive, thirty paces in front of us, a rivulet of fire. It

seems to me as broad as a little stream which would be spanned by the single arch of a bridge; it emerges from a semicircular aperture in the midst of the great extinct river. The lava, pushed up from its depths to this point, is like a high wave, a ridge of incandescent earth, which curls slowly over, and pushes on the preceding ridge. As we look, it grows more red. I follow it with the eye down the mountain side, until it is lost to view.

The sky is still pale. When I glance earthward again, after having my eyes lifted to the first stars, veiled in mist, trembling above the invisible lands of Sicily, it is now not merely a single rivulet of fire that I see before me, but at distances that the eye cannot measure in the darkness, thousands of points or broken lines, covering with a network of fire the entire slope of *Ætna*. The eruption, which must at first have been frightful, has reached the period of being odd and picturesque. It is an illumination, noiseless and unreflected, of avenues and squares, unbuilt, unpeopled; or it is like crimson lanterns hung through a forest. Very near me a sort of luminous fountain glows. The lava must ascend inside a rock set up on end, which seems to be very high. The fiery stream appears at the top of this rock, and drips in a cascade down each side. We are lost in this strange world, silent and unmindful of the passage of time.

Darkness had completely invaded the plateau. It was impossible for us to find the road by which

we had made the ascent, and we returned at random, picking our way among little craters, now each coiffed with its dome of vapour, reddened beneath by flash of sudden flames. Our mules had awaited us, without breaking the poor slip of juniper to which their bridles hung. They clambered up the steep slope of Monte Nero, traversing the second current of lava, and soon plunged their feet into the mossy ground under the chestnuts.

Then, the sky having become perfectly clear, the crescent moon shone out. Its white light fell on points of rock and on trunks of trees and denuded branches. The illusion was still unbroken, and I think the guide understood it. We rode downward in the wondrous silence of Ætna, in the freshness of a night that might have been of summer. He pointed from time to time, with a silent gesture, to the right or left to show us, through some clearing, the mountain side all dripping with fire. There remained the same singular deception, the same effect of some stately illumination. Only the rivulets of lava seemed to grow narrower, and to be no more than necklaces of fire, and the flaming points grouped themselves into constellations. Finally, when we reached Nicolosi, we could still see, between the roofs, the mountain all on fire above the tranquil, sleeping houses of the town.

A month later I was on my way back to France. I had taken the Cornice Road, and I was between

Geneva and Vintimiglia, close to the French frontier. Having failed to make connection, as the result of a slight accident during the night, we had been obliged to take an accommodation train, which stopped at each one of the little stations along the Riviera; and, fatigued with the journey, which was made interminable by slowness of the train, eager to be again in France, I gave but careless attention to the bays everywhere so beautiful, and to the mountains, so fine after we leave San Remo. Travellers of every sort had entered the compartment and had left it, and not a word been said by anyone, when, at one of the stations, an old gentleman, with long, bushy hair and a long frock-coat flapping about his legs, came in and seated himself opposite me.

As soon as we were again in motion, my sociable neighbour inquired as to my nationality.

"English?" he said.

"No."

"Russian?"

"No; I am French."

"Ah!" he said, lifting both hands; "the French used once to be so popular here in Piedmont, in the time when I was a young man! I am a doctor."

"Ah!" I said.

"I was present at the entrance of your troops into Milan, your soldiers and ours together. You have no idea of the enthusiasm. Your soldiers



changed caps with the Italians. Ladies, great ladies whom I could name, kissed your men. There was a rain of flowers from the windows, and there were banners, and triumphal arches, and shouts, '*Vive la France! Vive l'Italie!*' It was so fine! I myself had the care of some of the wounded French."

I asked him at random: "Did you know General F.?"

"Captain F.?" he said:

"Yes; but he has become a general."

"Indeed I did! I carried him in my arms. I was first assistant, and had the charge of a convoy of the wounded for Brescia. I took the captain out of the train and laid him on the stretcher when we reached the town. He said: 'How good that is! You carry me like a baby. I no longer suffer!' We expected to go to the hospital, but they would not let us do it. All the rich people of the town were eager to take care of the French soldiers! Shall you see him?"

"Oh, yes!"

"I don't think he will have forgotten me. Tell him that you met an old man, Dr. S., who now lives quite unknown at Pieve di Secco, but who remembers Solférino and Magenta and Palestro. Alas! those days when the French and we understood each other, and were friends, have gone, never to return!"

I answered him: "*Chi lo sa?*"—"Who knows?"

He looked at me astonished, and he was obliged to wink rapidly on account of the tears; just then the train stopped again, and as he rose to go he grasped both my hands:

“ Perhaps you are right! *Chi lo sa?* ”

THE END.

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